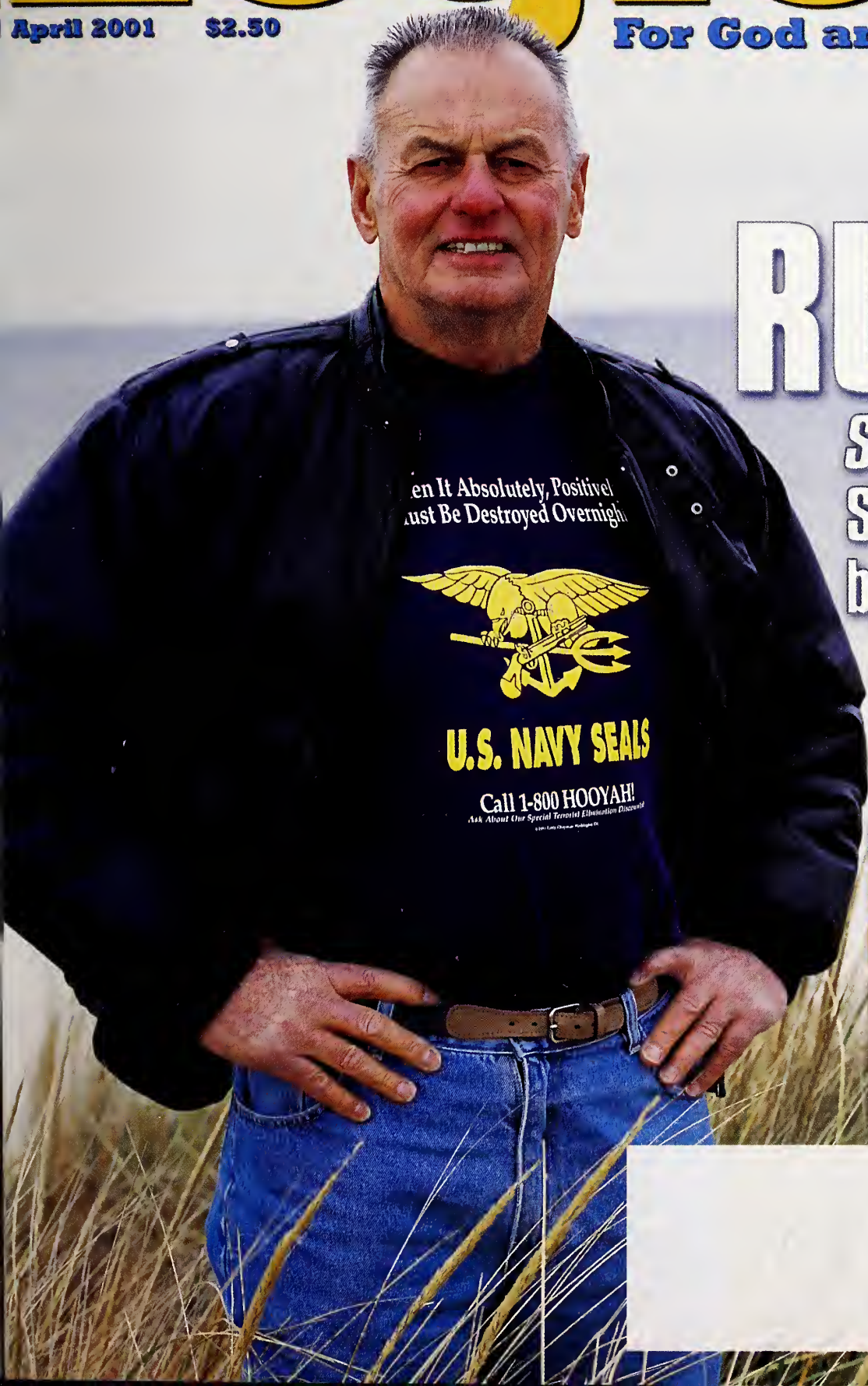


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The American Legion

For God and Country

Vol. 150, No. 4

The Magazine for a Strong America

APRIL 2001

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COVER Since Rudy Boesch's performance on television's 'Survivor' series made him a national celebrity, his days of Virginia Beach anonymity are over. In this issue, the retired Navy SEAL shares his thoughts on the military, family, the U.S. Flag and stardom. Tom Strattman photo

THE AMERICAN LEGION MAGAZINE, a leader among national general-interest publications, is published monthly by The American Legion for its 2.55 million readers. These wartime veterans, working through nearly 15,000 community-level Posts, dedicate themselves to God and Country and traditional American values; strong national security; adequate and compassionate care for veterans, their widows and orphans; community service; and the wholesome development of our nation's youths.

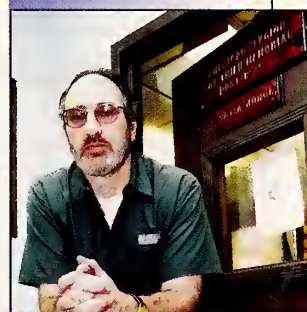


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Wake up, Hollywood

Regarding Michael Medved's article about public attitudes toward popular culture ("Politicians vs. Hollywood Heavyweights," February), I only hope



the people who produce motion pictures will take to heart some of his thoughts and clean up their acts.

Families should be able to attend movies together without being subjected to unnecessary vulgarity and

gore. We all abhor censorship, but every business that affects the public directly must be aware of what is good taste and what is not. Public attitudes change, as many retail stores have learned the hard way. Wake up, Hollywood!

—Lowell Haberer, Arlington Heights, Ill.

Keep politics out of movies

Thank you for the article "Politicians vs. Hollywood Heavyweights." The best thing these people could do for their careers is keep their mouths shut regarding politics. Maybe if some of them served in the military, they would have a different view. I'm at the point now where I watch few movies, and I'm not alone.

Regarding the childish remarks of Alec Baldwin and others who said they would leave the country if Bush were president, I'd like to buy them a one-way ticket to a country of my choice.

—Steve Kapp, Grove, Okla.

An America divided

I found much in Michael Medved's piece with which I agree. But he lost me in his last paragraph when he claimed the Hollywood bigshots would "lose in a landslide" if their liberal agendas were subjected to the judgment of the American voter.

If ever there was an opportunity for American voters to validate and restore our traditional values and social standards, the November presidential election was it. But instead what we got was an American public evenly split.

—Bill Eimers Jr., St. Maries, Idaho

We need Americanism

Much of the blame for the rapidly declining respect for our flag, anthem and country belongs to our homes and schools, where little if any Americanism is taught. Indeed, I have heard that some high schools have academic material teaching that America was the aggressor in World War II. We of our local Honor Guard recently stopped participating in certain parades due to wholesale disrespect of the flag by onlookers as we walk by.

—James E. Weaver, Lady Lake, Fla.

The way things should be

I am terribly offended by a few Olympic athletes' disrespectful actions toward the U.S. Flag. Those athletes appear young enough that they've most likely never been taught respect for the flag, the Constitution, the rights of others and many of the other values my generation holds dear. I seriously doubt they've ever been taught the importance of the sacrifices made by so many to protect and defend this country, our way of life and one of our most important symbols of freedom. Sure, the flag is a piece of cloth, but it's much more significant to some of us.

Perhaps the time has come for us to consider going back to some of the old ways: prayer in schools and the reciting of the Pledge of Allegiance every morning before classes begin. I was required

to do that, and it didn't hurt me at all. In fact, I believe I am a better person because of it.

—Clyde E. Albert, Hayward, Calif.

Time for flag amendment

Someone asked me the other day what I thought of the proposed amendment to the Constitution that would make it illegal to desecrate the U.S. Flag. My first reaction was, "I thought there was one." If I remember my American history classes correctly, we've had presidents who actually broke off diplomatic relations with countries that allowed their people to burn the American Flag.

I guess times have changed and many people feel, like some of my more liberal friends, that passing laws to protect the flag would be a violation of their right to free speech or their right to freedom of expression. They almost had me convinced until I talked to another friend, who laughed at their arguments. He said breaking a minor law is the entire point of civil disobedience. Passing a law to protect the flag would no more infringe on people's right to protest than a "No Trespassing" sign. If protesters don't feel strongly enough about the cause to break some minor laws, then they're not committed enough to be protesting in the first place.

Is it too much to ask a protester to suffer the consequences of his actions? I would never interfere with a person's right to express himself in any way. But, as in all things, actions beget reactions. Take responsibility for what you do, just like your brothers and sisters did when they went off to some strange land to fight for your right to protest.

Let's pass the flag amendment for all those who gave up so much for us. Let us have this one thing, for all we have done for this country.

—Steve Newton, Clever, Mo.

Flag needs our devotion

It is inconceivable that a nation such as ours would put the mindset of a few above the rights of a vast majority. But we have taken the preservation of liberty and stood on it for our own self-gratification.

The American Flag is not a symbol of this nation but a symbol of what it represents, its ideals and the dedication of a few to preserve them. To desecrate the flag and all it stands for is to deny

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the personal liberties of those who paid a heavy price to preserve freedom for all.

The motto rings out: "Some gave all, all gave some." Yet we should remember that many have given none. It is from this group that the so-called law of the land decrees that their voices be heard above all others and that their supposed right to besmirch our brethren has been violated. The idea of freedom of speech has been transgressed to the level that all expression is included.

But hasn't our right to expression been violated as well? Hasn't our right to freedom of speech been impaired by allowing a symbol of our expression, the flag, to be defiled? We are not given the same consideration as veterans, defenders of the rights that people cling to so dearly.

We are a nation "of the people, by the people and for the people." The time for asking our nation's leaders to do something should end, and the time to tell them what has to be done has come. We have the power given to us to effect change. Contact your senators and representatives and tell them you want our symbol of freedom protected.

—James Rainwater, Thorntown, Ind.

They knew the name

In 1958, I owned a TV sales and repair store in Mobile, Ala. Next door was a shoe repair store owned by a World War I veteran. He wanted to start up an American Legion Post, so we did just that — Post 77, where I'm a charter member.

Several years later, I was in Paris with a German girl. I wanted to buy her the most beautiful party dress there. The French clerks were flabbergasted when I attempted to pay with an American personal check. Soon the general manager showed up. "Who do you think you are?" he queried.

As I fumbled with the numerous IDs in my billfold, the manager looked in on one — my American Legion card. In a loud and exuberant voice, he said with broken English, "Ah, Legionnaire! Legionnaire!" I received hugs and kisses and was surrounded by the store's staff. They played "The Star-Spangled Banner" and "Dixie" for me, all at the same time.

The German girl and I walked out of the store with the dress, thanks to The American Legion. The French knew the name.

—Philip A. Mitchell, Las Vegas

More criminals, more jails

Rep. Jesse Jackson Jr., D-Ill., wants things both ways ("Should the Death Penalty Be Abolished?" Big Issues, February). He says, "If punishment and protecting society are the issue, then life in prison accomplishes both." Then he says we spend \$35 billion operating prisons and \$7 billion building new prisons annually, and that our money would be better spent on jobs and education. Where do we put these heinous murderers for life? As the nation's population grows, so does the number of criminals and the need for more prisons. Make up your mind, Jesse.

—Dick Gurley, Naples, Fla.

Give killer what he fears

The answer to the question posed to Rep. George Gekas, R-Pa., and Rep. Jesse Jackson Jr., D-Ill., regarding the death penalty is quite simple — give the convicted killer a choice. Does he want the death penalty or does he want to spend the rest of his life in prison? If the convicted killer requests the death penalty, give him life in prison. If he requests life in prison, give him the death penalty. In other words, carry out the sentence he fears most.

—Stella L. Jatras, Sterling, Va.

Choose best treatment

Thank you for Phyllis Zauner's article "Prostate Cancer War Winnable" (February). You may have saved many lives. As pointed out, prostate cancer is curable if detected in time. Of all cancers, it is one of the easiest to detect with the simple PSA blood test.



Zauner mentions the two dreaded side effects of impotence and incontinence. These may not accompany every treatment. Several options exist besides surgery, such as radiation, brachytherapy, seed implants and hormonal therapy. It is the man's body and his responsibility to choose the treatment. However, it should be an informed choice. He should be aware that most urological surgeons will rec-

ommend surgery and radiologists will recommend radiation.

With the help of more than 20 doctors and several prostate cancer survivors, I have put together a book with chapters on all major treatments. It can be read for free online at www.prostatepointers.org/prostate/lay/apilgrim.

—Aubrey Pilgrim, Long Beach, Calif.

Earley represents best

Thank you for the article on Charity Adams Earley ("Special Delivery," January), who richly deserves this focus. She truly represents the best of women who have served in the military since the Revolutionary War and who continue to serve valiantly and competently today.

—Lynn Ashley, Forest Park, Ohio

Too much with too little

I wish to commend National Commander Ray Smith for his excellent analysis of the bombing of the USS *Cole* ("Decline of Military Might Hits Home," January). From 1972 to 1974, I served as operations officer and navigator aboard the USS *Sacramento*, one of the Navy's largest supply vessels. We provided fuel, ammunition and food stores to other Navy vessels at sea under the protection of the American Flag. Sending a Navy ship into a known hostile port where security was not provided by U.S. forces was unheard of then. Sadly, the *Cole* tragedy demonstrates the danger of attempting to do too much with too little. Hopefully, our new administration will not continue this policy.

—David C. Jarrett, Elizabethtown, Ky.

Let parents control funds

Thank you for Armstrong Williams' fine article ("School Vouchers: The Road to Better Education," January). Vouchers are a simple idea: Put the money where the students are. We will have a better education system when parents can direct the funds for their children's education rather than teachers' unions.

—W. Patrick Resen, San Ramon, Calif.

Teachers deserve support

When I read Armstrong Williams' opinion that "public schools ... have no real incentive for success and no real

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This medicine can help many men when it is used as prescribed by their doctors. However, VIAGRA is not for everyone. It is intended for use only by men who have a condition called erectile dysfunction. **VIAGRA must never be used by men who are taking medicines that contain nitrates of any kind, at any time. This includes nitroglycerin. If you take VIAGRA with any nitrate medicine your blood pressure could suddenly drop to an unsafe or life threatening level.**

What Is VIAGRA?

VIAGRA is a pill used to treat erectile dysfunction (impotence) in men. It can help many men who have erectile dysfunction get and keep an erection when they become sexually excited (stimulated).

You will not get an erection just by taking this medicine. VIAGRA helps a man with erectile dysfunction get an erection only when he is sexually excited.

How Sex Affects the Body

When a man is sexually excited, the penis rapidly fills with more blood than usual. The penis then expands and hardens. This is called an erection. After the man is done having sex, this extra blood flows out of the penis back into the body. The erection goes away. It can take a long time (more than 6 hours), it can permanently damage your penis. You should call a doctor immediately if you ever have a prolonged erection that lasts more than 4 hours.

Some conditions and medicines interfere with this natural erection process. The penis cannot fill with enough blood. The man cannot have an erection. This is called erectile dysfunction. It becomes a frequent problem.

During sex, your heart works harder. Therefore sexual activity may not be advisable for people who have heart problems. Before you start any treatment for erectile dysfunction, ask your doctor if your heart is healthy enough to handle the extra strain of having sex. If you have chest pains, dizziness or nausea during sex, stop having sex and immediately tell your doctor you have had this problem.

How VIAGRA Works

VIAGRA enables many men with erectile dysfunction to respond to sexual stimulation. When a man is sexually excited, VIAGRA helps the penis fill with enough blood to cause an erection. After sex is over, the erection goes away.

VIAGRA Is Not for Everyone

As noted above (*How Sex Affects the Body*), ask your doctor if your heart is healthy enough for sexual activity.

If you take any medicines that contain nitrates—either regularly or as needed—you should never take VIAGRA. If you take VIAGRA with any nitrate medicine or recreational drug containing nitrates, your blood pressure could suddenly drop to an unsafe level. You could get dizzy, faint, or even have a heart attack or stroke. Nitrates are found in many prescription medicines that are used to treat angina (chest pain due to heart disease) such as:

- nitroglycerin (sprays, ointments, skin patches or pastes, and tablets that are swallowed or dissolved in the mouth)
- isosorbide mononitrate and isosorbide dinitrate (tablets that are swallowed, chewed, or dissolved in the mouth)

Nitrates are also found in recreational drugs such as amyl nitrate or nitrite ("poppers"). If you are not sure if any of your medicines contain nitrates, or if you do not understand what nitrates are, ask your doctor or pharmacist.

VIAGRA is only for patients with erectile dysfunction. VIAGRA is not for newborns, children, or women. Do not let anyone else take your VIAGRA. VIAGRA must be used only under a doctor's supervision.

What VIAGRA Does Not Do

- VIAGRA does not cure erectile dysfunction. It is a treatment for erectile dysfunction.
- VIAGRA does not protect you or your partner from getting sexually transmitted diseases, including HIV—the virus that causes AIDS.
- VIAGRA is not a hormone or an aphrodisiac.

What To Tell Your Doctor Before You Begin VIAGRA

Only your doctor can decide if VIAGRA is right for you. VIAGRA can cause mild, temporary lowering of your blood pressure. You will need to have a thorough medical exam to diagnose your erectile dysfunction and to find out if you can safely take VIAGRA alone or with your other medicines. Your doctor should determine if your heart is healthy enough to handle the extra strain of having sex.

Be sure to tell your doctor if you:

- have ever had any heart problems (e.g., angina, chest pain, heart failure, irregular heart beats, or heart attack)
- have ever had a stroke
- have low or high blood pressure
- have a rare inherited eye disease called retinitis pigmentosa
- have ever had any kidney problems

- have ever had any liver problems
- have ever had any blood problems, including sickle cell anemia or leukemia
- are allergic to sildenafil or any of the other ingredients of VIAGRA tablets
- have a deformed penis, Peyronie's disease, or ever had an erection that lasted more than 4 hours
- have stomach ulcers or any types of bleeding problems
- are taking any other medicines

VIAGRA and Other Medicines

Some medicines can change the way VIAGRA works. Tell your doctor about **any medicines** you are taking. Do not start or stop taking any medicines before checking with your doctor or pharmacist. This includes prescription and nonprescription medicines or remedies. Remember, VIAGRA should never be used with medicines that contain nitrates (see *VIAGRA Is Not for Everyone*). If you are taking a protease inhibitor, your dose may be adjusted (please see *Finding the Right Dose for You*). VIAGRA should not be used with any other medical treatments that cause erections. These treatments include pills, medicines that are injected or inserted into the penis, implants or vacuum pumps.

Finding the Right Dose for You

VIAGRA comes in different doses (25 mg, 50 mg and 100 mg). If you do not get the results you expect, talk with your doctor. You and your doctor can determine the dose that works best for you.

- Do not take more VIAGRA than your doctor prescribes.
- If you think you need a larger dose of VIAGRA, check with your doctor.
- VIAGRA should not be taken more than once a day.

If you are older than age 65, or have serious liver or kidney problems, your doctor may start you at the lowest dose (25 mg) of VIAGRA. If you are taking protease inhibitors, such as for the treatment of HIV, your doctor may recommend a 25 mg dose and may limit you to a maximum single dose of 25 mg of VIAGRA in a 48 hour period.

How To Take VIAGRA

Take VIAGRA about one hour before you plan to have sex. Beginning in about 30 minutes and for up to 4 hours, VIAGRA can help you get an erection if you are sexually excited. If you take VIAGRA after a high-fat meal (such as a cheeseburger and french fries), the medicine may take a little longer to start working. VIAGRA can help you get an erection when you are sexually excited. You will not get an erection just by taking the pill.

Possible Side Effects

Like all medicines, VIAGRA can cause some side effects. These effects are usually mild to moderate and usually don't last longer than a few hours. Some of these side effects are more likely to occur with higher doses. The most common side effects of VIAGRA are headache, flushing of the face, and upset stomach. Less common side effects that may occur are temporary changes in color vision (such as trouble telling the difference between blue and green objects or having a blue color tinge to them), eyes being more sensitive to light, or blurred vision.

In rare instances, men have reported an erection that lasts many hours. You should call a doctor immediately if you ever have an erection that lasts more than 4 hours. If not treated right away, permanent damage to your penis could occur (see *How Sex Affects the Body*).

Heart attack, stroke, irregular heart beats, and death have been reported rarely in men taking VIAGRA. Most, but not all, of these men had heart problems before taking this medicine. It is not possible to determine whether these events were directly related to VIAGRA.

VIAGRA may cause other side effects besides those listed on this sheet. If you want more information or develop any side effects or symptoms you are concerned about, call your doctor.

Accidental Overdose

In case of accidental overdose, call your doctor right away.

Storing VIAGRA

Keep VIAGRA out of the reach of children. Keep VIAGRA in its original container. Store at room temperature, 59°-86°F (15°-30°C).

For More Information on VIAGRA

VIAGRA is a prescription medicine used to treat erectile dysfunction. Only your doctor can decide if it is right for you. This sheet is only a summary. If you have any questions or want more information about VIAGRA, talk with your doctor or pharmacist, visit www.viagra.com, or call 1-888-4VIAGRA.

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VETVOICE

consequence for failure," I was sickened. As teachers, both my husband and I are absolutely committed to achieving success, not because we get thanked, get bonus pay or get our names in the paper, but because we are teachers.

We teach the gifted, the special-education kids, the athletes, the motivated, the angry, the dirty. We deserve to be supported by parents who actively care about their children by a public that values high education standards for all and by a government that does not get sidetracked from recognizing the potential and promise inherent in free public education for all children. Someone like Williams who claims we have "no real incentive for success" is out of touch.

— Shirley Pauer, Dahinda, Ill.

Truth exonerated McVay

I had just completed reading the article "House Exonerates USS *Indianapolis* Captain" (December) when I received an updated copy of Richard F. Newcomb's book "Abandon Ship!" for Christmas. My father served on the *Indianapolis* in 1942, and I was interested in the ship's subsequent loss. Needless to say, the book's final chapter reveals the true extent of the Navy's denial of responsibility for the fateful voyage.

The big brass worked hard to keep their hands clean after July 30, 1945, and they did it for 55 years. However, the efforts of Capt. Charles McVay's two sons and an 11-year-old Florida student finally succeeded in breaking the secrecy surrounding this terrible trail of cover-up and injustice.

I applaud Sen. John Warner, R-Va., for agreeing to conduct hearings on this incident and The American Legion's Naval Affairs Committee for its persistence.

— Gregory R. Cooper, Falls Church, Va.

Corrections

In a photo accompanying the article "After the Storm" (February), soldiers of the 82nd Airborne Division are wearing rainsuits, not chemical-warfare suits. Also, the destroyer tender USS *Acadia* was incorrectly identified as a destroyer.

In the article "Legionnaires Remember the Alamo," the dates of death for the Alamo defenders were actually over a period of days in March 1836.

We apologize for the errors.

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Resolutions vital to Legion's mission

At the beginning of each year, many of us make New Year's resolutions. And usually we forget about them or put them in the back of our minds, hoping no one will remind us of what we committed ourselves to. For many of us, it's just a silly game.

Well, the resolution process is no game to The American Legion. In fact, it's serious business. Without the resolution process, our organization would not have guidance in developing programs, allocating funds to help veterans or targeting Congress with issues that affect you, me and the rest of this great country of ours.

Resolutions tell those of us in leadership roles what our members want. Many are written by dedicated Legionnaires and submitted at Post meetings. If approved by the local membership, the resolution proceeds to the next step – either the District or County or directly to the Department level – to be dealt with at a Department Executive Committee meeting or the Department Convention.

“Resolutions tell leadership what membership wants. Resolutions help leadership make decisions.”

Finally, with approval at the Department level, the resolution is sent to National Headquarters, where it is registered by either the Resolutions Subcommittee for the National Executive Committee or the Resolutions Assignment Committee of the National Convention. The resolution is forwarded to the appropriate national-level committee for study. Then, either the National Executive Committee or the National Convention delegates vote upon it.

A resolution is a description of a

problem or situation that is then followed by a suggestion as to how to correct it. It consists of two parts: the preamble (description of the problem) and the resolving clause (how the local Post or even the national organization should solve the problem or support the issue). The entire resolution should be one long, continuous sentence with the preamble clause(s) first and the resolve clause(s) second. A good description on how to write a resolution is found in the Legion's "Officers Guide and Manual of Ceremonies." Copies can be obtained from the Legion's Web site or from Emblem Sales.

Should be Relevant. Any Legionnaire should be able to write a resolution. It is important, however, that the issue is germane to what The American Legion stands for. A good guide is to see if the resolution fits in with the principles of our preamble. Keep in mind that a resolution should contain supporting documentation, be free of errors in fact and law, and be relevant to the purposes and programs of The American Legion.

If you would like to see some samples that have been approved as actual resolutions, call the Library at National Headquarters at (317)630-1356, or send an e-mail message to library@legion.org for the digest of a previous meeting that contains the text of many resolutions passed at the national level. Also, the Legion's Web site will contain those resolutions passed at a previous National Convention. Remember that the Legion isn't unique in this process. Many organizations, from your local school board all the way to the U.S. Congress, issue resolutions that state their positions and call for action.

Along the way, your resolution might change somewhat. Input from the county or state level might add to the arguments or improve style and grammar. Finally, if the resolution makes it to the national level, a committee of specialists will study the



National Commander Ray G. Smith

matter and recommend whether to support it. The resolution is then considered by the National Executive Committee or National Convention delegates. Upon approval, the proposal becomes the position of The American Legion.

Does what you write really matter? Before the 1944 GI Bill of Rights was passed by Congress, there were calls by Posts, in resolution format, for educational and health benefits for World War II veterans. Before the Oratorical Contest or American Legion Baseball became national programs, they were local events forwarded to the national level for consideration. Resolutions tell leadership what membership wants. Resolutions help leadership make decisions.

It may be too late for you to make a New Year's resolution. But it's never too late to write a Legion resolution. A resolution originating at your Post may become one of the legislative mandates that President George W. Bush sees on his desk in the White House. You do have the power to influence what happens in The American Legion and in this great country of ours, but only if you resolve to do it.



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THE 'SURVIVOR' SEAL

Television fame requires a different set of survival skills for the Navy's most famous master chief.

THERE WAS A TIME Rudy Boesch could walk the streets of Virginia Beach, Va., unrecognized by few beyond his military colleagues, family and friends. His appearance on CBS' hit television series "Survivor" changed all that.

Today, Rudy easily becomes an accident waiting to happen by just climbing into his car and driving to the grocery store. People paste their faces to the side windows of their automobiles, gawking, waving and mouthing, "Oh, my God, it's Rudy. Look, it's Rudy."

By any measure, Rudy is a pop icon – not by choice, but by happenstance, as he would have you believe. Like many, he is conflicted. He says he enjoys much of the attention "Survivor" has tossed his way. But Rudy says he also wishes he could just go to SEAL (Sea-Air-Land) Team Two Headquarters at Little Creek Amphibious Base near Virginia Beach, Va., and hang with his SEAL buddies. That's where he feels most comfortable.

And why not? Rudy joined the Navy in 1945 a strapping young lad of 17 and was a sailor 45 years until his retirement in 1990. He left the Navy as its longest-serving member. Rudy trusts his fellow SEALs. He respects them and they he.

When Rudy wanders into SEAL Team Two Headquarters everyone notices, from recruit to commander. All seek his handshake. "Good



Rudy proudly displays his "Rowdy Rudy's Diner" souvenir crafted by fellow "Survivor" Kelly Wiglesworth.

morning, Master Chief. Welcome aboard," they say. Rudy is all smiles.

"These are the guys I respect, you know. These are the guys I have trusted with my life," Rudy says.

The feeling is mutual.

"When you talk about tradition, pride, character and trust, just one word comes to mind – Rudy," says SEAL Team Two Commander Scott Moore. "Much of what we are today is a result of Master Chief Boesch's leadership."

Rudy has opinions – plenty of them. What surprises him most is that anyone cares what he thinks. That's the power of television. People do care what *People* magazine's "Sexiest Survivor" has to say. They know he'll say what he means and mean what he

says, regardless of the consequences.

With that in mind, *The American Legion Magazine* assistant editor James V. Carroll traveled to Virginia Beach to find out firsthand what's on Rudy's mind.

THE AMERICAN LEGION MAGAZINE: How did you feel about being named the sexiest "Survivor" by *People* magazine?

RUDY BOESCH: I can't figure it out. If I had to pick out the sexiest guy, I wouldn't be looking in this house. I don't know what they were looking for, but it's all right with me. There're two other guys from Virginia Beach – a 15-year-old kid and a 29-year-old guy – and they took pictures of all three of us. The kid and the guy were voted the sexiest guys, too. All three of us from Virginia Beach – it must be in the water or something.

Q: Why did you remain in the Navy 45 years?

A: I liked what I was doing. I joined the Navy in 1945 and got into the Underwater Demolition Team in 1951, and boy, it was exciting. You got up in the morning



Rudy was part of the original SEAL Team in 1962. Courtesy Rudy Boesch

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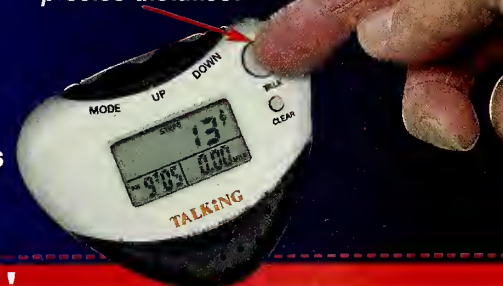
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and you didn't know what you might end up doing that day. When the SEAL team started in 1962, that was even more exciting. I looked forward to going to work every day. I was hoping I'd die of old age in the Navy, but they wouldn't let me. I was offered a commission a couple of times but I didn't take it, and I'm glad because I wouldn't have been able to do 45 years.

Q: Why did you choose the Navy over the other branches of the armed services?

A: I wanted to join the Marines, but I was only 17. They said I had to be 18. So I walked next door and joined the Navy.

Q: What is your response to those who say the military is no longer an honorable profession?

A: I think it's honorable but the young kids don't. It's hard to get recruits today.

Q: How do we turn that around?

A: The living's too easy in this country and I don't think you can. I mean, I think the only thing that'll wake up these kids is someone coming across our beaches — then they'll have to fight. They haven't seen a war. As long as the living is like it is here, things won't change.

Q: What would be your advice to anyone wanting to join the military?

A: I'd say, "Go ahead. I wish I could go with you." I can't think of a better life than military life. The people are a good bunch. It's like the SEALs. You end up working with the best people. I respect people in the military more than most anybody else.

Q: Why do you think people desecrate the American Flag?



Rudy is constantly asked for his autograph. Robin King, a UDT-SEAL Association Headquarters staff member, collects hers. Rudy is a founding member of the association.

A: They just don't care. I blame it on the breakup of the family. There's little or no family life in this country anymore. There's no discipline. Many kids have only one parent and others don't have any. Kids aren't taught respect for anything at all. The family is where it all begins. When you send your kid to school, the school shouldn't be teaching him discipline. That should have been done at home. Parents don't do that anymore.

Q: What would you suggest be done to those who burn or desecrate our flag?

A: If they don't like this country, they can get out. Go find a better one. I've been all over the world and there's nothing that compares to our country — nothing.

Q: What is your take on the controversy raging in Washington over placement of the World War II Memorial?

A: I think they should put it right in the middle of everything so everyone can see it. It's the biggest war we ever had. But they better get it done while there are still some World War II veterans left to see it.

Q: How tough was it to survive on "Survivor"?

A: Putting up with the kids was the hardest part. I was old enough to be a great-grandfather to some of 'em. They spoke a different language. But once they started arguing amongst themselves, I just had to sit back and keep my mouth shut and let them eliminate each other.

Q: How do you deal with your newfound fame, if not fortune?

A: I don't want recognition. I liked it when I could walk down the street and no one bothered me. I can't do that anymore. A lot of people want autographs. They even stop me at the commissary and ask me to autograph things — paper bags, napkins and stuff like that. I can be standing with a bag of ice cream and it'll melt before I can get out of the store.

Q: Are there any political plans in your future?

A: No way. But I heard that I did get one vote in November for president on the Libertarian ticket. My wife, Marge, and I were having dinner with Minnesota Gov. Jesse Ventura and I told him about it. I asked him if he wanted to be my vice president, and he said "Yes." Can you picture that? Me, the president? ☐

Article design: Holly K. Soria



Rudy and his wife of 42 years, Marge, have three grown daughters, Ellen Marie, Patricia Ann and Barbara Jean, and one granddaughter, Kelsey.

Rudy survived five decades in the Navy

1928: Born in Rochester, N.Y.

1945: Joined the Navy at age 17. Volunteered for secret and hazardous duty with the Amphibious Scouts and Rangers, a highly classified naval commando unit.

1951: Completed Underwater Demolition Team training and assigned to UDT-2, where he completed many deployments with the Naval Amphibious Forces.

1962: Became one of 50 hand-selected enlisted men of the original SEAL Team Two.

1967: Advanced to rank of master chief petty officer and, between combat tours in Vietnam, served as command master chief, the senior enlisted position.

1968: Served first of two six-month combat tours in Vietnam. Earned the Bronze Star for heroic action during more than 45 combat missions.

1988: Selected as senior enlisted advisor to U.S. Special Operations Command on all enlisted matters of the Joint Command. Awarded the Defense Superior Service Medal, an honor seldom given to an enlisted man.

1990: Retired with an honorable discharge from the Navy at the rank of master chief boatswain's mate.

1999: Participated in The History Channel documentary featuring the Navy SEALs.

2000: Became contestant of original "Survivor" television show and America's most recognized Navy SEAL.

2001: Honored by the Virginia Legislature for 45 years of dedicated service in the military. Hosted a four-part survival series on The History Channel.

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REMODELING YOUR PORTFOLIO

From time to time, investments need a little repair and maintenance.

By Eric Tyson

OVER THE YEARS, most of us accumulate investments the way we pile up stuff in our attics or garages. Portfolios often reflect the histories of our lives rather than current investment objectives, risk desires and tax situations.

Even if you had a clear investment plan five, 10 or 20 years ago, a lot has changed since then. Your children may have left home. You may be divorced or widowed. Your income, net worth and tax bracket probably have changed. Whatever the case, your previous investment strategies may no longer fit your current life.

As a financial counselor, writer and lecturer, I know that for many people rehabbing an investment portfolio — like rehabbing a home — seems daunting. However, reworking your investments shouldn't take too much time nor be too costly, and it doesn't require pounding any nails or getting paint on your overalls.

Here's how to give your investments and your investment approach a professional makeover that won't cost an arm and a leg, should boost your returns and may reduce your paperwork and hassles:

Consider the Big Picture. Early in your working years, you probably had little in

the way of investments and a greater debt burden from student and consumer loans and mortgage debt.

Over time, increased savings can provide you with the wherewithal to pay off remaining debt such as a mortgage. Because mortgage interest is tax-deductible, some people are reluctant to pay off mortgage debt. While it's true that your investments may generate a higher rate of return than your mortgage interest rate, no investment return is guaranteed, especially in the short term. Paying off your mortgage early, on the other hand, is an investment with a guaranteed pre-tax effective return equal to your interest rate. For older, more conservative investors, such a strategy can make a lot of sense.

In addition to paying off debt with extra cash, if you're still working, be sure to maximize retirement-account contributions. If money is piling up outside retirement accounts, that's a sure sign you could be saving more in tax-reduction accounts.

As your assets have grown, you may have developed an unanticipated estate-tax problem. For the 2001 tax year, estates of up to \$675,000 can be passed along, free of federal taxes, to heirs following one's passing. Estates above that amount are taxed at the federal level at rates that can range from 37 percent to 60 percent. So if you have a large estate, consider implementing a plan to reduce its size by "gifting" to your heirs while you are still alive. You can gift up to \$10,000 per recipient per year, free of taxation.

Clean up the Clutter. Too many accounts and too many investment holdings are the inevitable result of many years spent working and investing. Moving from employer to employer, with extra money here and there to invest, the number of accounts and investments can quickly pile up.

Clutter is problematic on numerous fronts. First, it hampers your ability to keep tabs on your investments. The more investments you have, the less time you're likely to spend regularly assessing the pros and cons of holding each one. Do you at least read the annual reports? If not, that can be a sign you've got too many holdings and are neglecting some basic monitoring.

Large volumes of paperwork can cost money and time. The more complicated your portfolio, the higher your tax-preparation bill. Clutter also increases the possibility of literally losing track of an investment or two, especially those for which you hold the stock and bond certificates directly.

To reduce the clutter, first try paring down the number of accounts you have. Consider the purpose of each account and eliminate those which duplicate each other. All other features being equal (and they increasingly are these days), try to consolidate into accounts that charge lower commissions and annual fees.

Brokerage accounts, for example, typically offer the same range of features and benefits, but some charge more for their services than others do. Discount brokerage firms may be a good value, allowing customers the ability to hold mutual funds from various fund companies and individual securities all in one account. Discount firms don't generally levy an annual fee for a regular brokerage account.

More discount brokers now offer free dividend-reinvestment plans: account holders can use stock dividends to purchase commission-free shares in the company issuing the dividend. Holding stock shares through such an account rather than directly through individual companies also should help cut down the number of accounts.

In addition to shrinking the total accounts, you should consider paring down

the number of different investments you hold. Mutual-fund investors should consider eliminating funds with very similar investment objectives. Consider paring down individual security holdings and replacing them with mutual funds. Also, weigh the hassle factor. Being a landlord of high-maintenance rental real estate properties in an area with historically poor returns, for instance, may be more trouble than it's worth.

Fix Your Investment Mix. With the tremendous rise in the U.S. stock market in recent years, if you haven't tinkered with your initial mix of stocks and bonds, the stock portion will have grown compared to the rest of your portfolio, thanks to more rapid appreciation.

As you get older, however, you should gradually scale back the risk in your portfolio. One asset-allocation rule of thumb I like is to take your age and subtract it from 110; the resulting number is the percentage of your retirement portfolio to invest in stocks. For example, a 40-year-old would put about 70 percent (110 minus 40) of his portfolio in stocks. However, with the stocks appreciating 15 percent per year as they have over the past 15 years and bonds at half that rate, such a portfolio would evolve to one with more than 86 percent in stocks. Fifteen years later, however, the 40-year-old would be 55 and would want about 55 percent (110 minus 55) in stocks, not 86 percent.

While tax considerations should be a factor in deciding what and when to sell, don't be driven by them. Remember that the long-term capital-gains tax rate (for investments held more than 12 months outside of retirement accounts) is 20 percent for those in the 28-percent and higher federal tax brackets and just 10 percent for those in the 15-percent federal tax bracket.

When creating your investment recipe, consider, in addition to your age, where you stand in terms of the adequacy of your retirement nest egg. Doing a retirement analysis will allow you to see how much or little risk you need to take to accomplish your desired goal. Some investment companies offer helpful worksheets for this.

Turn Off the Talking Heads. Let's face it. The media as well as the financial community boost anxieties by discussing doomsday financial-market scenarios. In recent years, Internet and technology stocks were given the spotlight and investors saw all sorts of charts illustrating

the piles of money being made in short order from their skyrocketing stock prices. Novice investors jumped in to join the party.

In 2000, the technology-laden NASDAQ had its single-biggest one-year drop ever when it plunged 39.3 percent. Many Internet stocks dropped even more – some more than 90 percent – and there were numerous bankruptcies. The news reports shifted to covering the carnage.

One way to deal with fear is to combat it by educating yourself. Knowing the length and magnitude of historic stock-market declines, for example, can make you feel more comfortable when an inevitable bear market hits.

Cut Your Tax Burden. In their 50s and 60s, many people undergo dramatic changes in their incomes and thus their tax brackets. Although these can be higher earning years for some, others are beginning to scale back on full-time work, and taxable income could decline.

No matter which direction your tax bracket is heading, non-retirement account investments bought years ago when you were in a different tax situation may not work as well for your current tax situation. First, you need to determine your current "marginal" tax rate. Because of our graduated system, dollars of income are not treated equally – they are taxed at increasing rates as they pass through different tax brackets. Whatever tax bracket your last dollar of income falls in is your marginal rate and the rate you should be thinking about when considering the impact of taxes on your investments.

To determine your marginal rate, examine your most recent return and locate your "taxable income." Then find one of those charts (in a tax book or in your 1040 instructions) that translates your taxable income to its respective federal bracket. If you pay state income taxes, find a similar state table and add that rate to your federal marginal rate. You could also ask your tax adviser what your combined marginal rate is.

When investing in bonds, if you're in the 31-percent federal tax bracket or higher, municipal bonds should net you a higher yield than comparable taxable bonds. If you're in the 15-percent federal bracket, stick with taxable corporate and mortgage bonds or Treasuries.

With stock mutual funds, if you're a high-bracket investor, minimize funds paying high dividends as well as those making larger capital gains distributions (more than about 5 percent

of the fund's value annually).

Shed Subpar Performers. I'm often surprised at how few people, especially those in individual securities, know their portfolios and annual returns on individual investments over the years. Knowing how your holdings are doing is crucial to assessing whether what you own is working for you or worthy of dumping.

A major advantage of mutual funds is that each reports its annual total return. Compare each fund's annual performance against the relevant market index. For example, stock mutual funds that invest mainly in large-company U.S. stocks should be compared against the Standard & Poor's 500 index.

If you hold individual securities, you'll first need to tally up the value of your holdings at the most recent year's end and compare that to the value of your holdings from one year earlier. Don't forget to take into account fees and trading costs. Again compare those returns to relevant benchmarks. If you do a fair amount of trading, also calculate your after-tax returns. Remember, it's what you keep, not what you made before taxes, that counts.

Overcome Isolation. Going from being part of a couple to being single again can paralyze financial decision making. Take time to educate yourself and build your knowledge and confidence before working with financial advisers or plunging into action. Be patient and don't rush into decisions, especially after a major life change, such as a spouse's death or divorce.

Try talking with family members and friends in similar situations. Two or more heads can be better than one when making difficult and emotional financial decisions. □

This article discusses a number of issues concerning various options of investing and is not nor is it intended to be investment advice. See your broker or investment adviser for investment advice.



Eric Tyson is a financial counselor, syndicated columnist and the author of several best-selling financial books, including "Investing for Dummies" and "Personal Finance for Dummies."

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EYES ON THE IRS

Reforms reign in behemoth agency, but reports of injustice persist.

By Donald Lambro

AFTER DECADES OF mounting abuses by federal tax collectors who all too often persecuted and punished innocent taxpayers and small businesses, Congress passed a historic taxpayer bill of rights in 1998 to reform and rein in the nation's most-hated government agency.

In the wake of explosive hearings in 1997 and 1998 that exposed a litany of long-suppressed IRS misconduct, then-Sen. Bill Roth of Delaware, who chaired the tax-writing Finance Committee, proposed reform legislation. President Clinton, after initially opposing many of its provisions, signed the legislation July 22 that year.

Nearly three years later, under the new leadership of IRS Commissioner Charles O. Rossotti, the bulk of those reforms have been implemented and IRS critics are giving his efforts high marks. But much is still wrong with the

agency, from an outdated data system to a painstakingly slow bureaucracy. And even more is wrong with the insanely complicated, hugely expensive and inefficient tax code that is beyond the ability of any person, let alone the ordinary taxpayer, to understand.

Roth's dramatic hearings, widely reported by the news media, sent shock waves through the capital. Innocent taxpayers testified for the first time about how they had been wrongly accused by IRS agents. IRS whistleblowers, their identity kept secret, revealed long-suppressed abuses by agency officials.

Taxpayers Bullied. A husband and wife told how their Virginia diner was ransacked by IRS agents. The couple was hit with escalating fines and the threat of losing their business. Innocent spouses, whose ex-husbands left them with huge tax bills, told how they were hounded by the agency for huge levies they could not afford. Seven IRS agents testified that they were subjected to hostile reprisals after they had filed complaints about corrupt agency practices.

Former IRS officials told how agents looked at small businesses as easy targets to go after to boost their annual quotas for increased fines. Mom-and-pop cases are easy hits and can be opened and closed quickly to bolster numbers, rather than investing time in big cases that take longer and require more resources, a veteran IRS employee testified.

A hostile, adversarial and tyrannical culture developed in the IRS over the decades that seemed to be beholden to no one, least of all members of Congress.

The threatening tone of an anonymous note sent by an IRS agent to a tax attorney underscored how bad things had gotten in the agency. Roth had a blowup of the note brought into the hearing room. It read: "You and your clients are next. You are currently under investigation, and I'm waiting for the day your name is in the paper."

The Clinton administration fought the reform legislation, which was originally based on recommendations by a 1996 bipartisan commission led



by Rep. Bob Portman, R-Ohio, and then-Sen. Robert Kerrey, D-Neb. Those recommendations languished in Congress. But after Roth's electrifying hearings, which unleashed a wave of constituent mail, the bill sailed through the House by a vote of 402-8 and then through the Senate 96-2.

Shifting the Burden. The reforms included creation of an independent oversight board made up largely of private citizens; shifting the burden of proof in tax disputes from taxpayers to the IRS; overhauling the IRS customer service rules to turn it into a more consumer-friendly agency; preventing abusive IRS tax collection methods and penalties; permitting taxpayers to sue the agency for up to \$100,000 for "negligence," where before they were only allowed to sue for "reckless" or "intentional" abuses; and extending attorney-

client privilege to taxpayer discussions with their tax accountants.

The Department of the Treasury vociferously opposed the creation of an independent oversight board and restrictions on IRS agents, arguing it would be harder for the agency to go after income tax cheats. But when the White House saw the pro-reform polling data on the issue that the Roth hearings had ignited, and with midterm congressional elections approaching, it dropped its opposition.

When Clinton reluctantly signed the IRS Restructuring and Reform Act in summer 1998, he said it would "give the American people an IRS they deserve."

Yet the verdict is somewhat mixed on whether the IRS put an end to the abuses and fixed its problems. Under the firm hand of Rossotti, a corporate executive who has run the agency since November 1997, much has changed for the better. But the IRS has a long way to go before all reforms are fully implemented. Meanwhile, some members of Congress are saying the reforms went too far and have tied the agency's hands in going after delinquent taxpayers.

"While a promising start has been made, the agency is in the middle of a massive reorganization and transition. Many problems have yet to be solved



A hostile, adversarial and tyrannical culture developed in the IRS over the decades that seemed to be beholden to no one, least of all members of Congress.



actions, as required under the 1998 reforms, but the NTU says it is "disappointed with the [IRS'] progress of processing these applications for relief."

A huge backlog of spousal cases needs to be resolved to ease their financial burdens. More needs to be done to reduce these delays, auditors say.

Reports continue to surface of tax collectors who, pushed to meet numerical performance goals, mistreat taxpayers. In one major blunder in New Jersey, 8,500 taxpayers were forced to pay money and fines they did not owe the government, according to the Treasury Department's Inspector General in a report filed more than a year after the reforms were enacted.

"New Jersey's taxpayers were inappropriately issued levies without proper notice, in hardship conditions and when they weren't liable for the tax in question," the IG concluded.

The National Taxpayers Union's files bulge with letters from taxpayers who have faced similar problems and worse. "The IRS attached a lien on my mother's check and my daddy's check, and he could not meet his other obligations because of it," wrote the daughter of one taxpayer who was wrongly punished when an Alabama mail-handlers union he worked for overstated his salary for 10 years.

"That was the first time that I saw my daddy cry. He had been up against a lot of obstacles working, raising and educating seven children, and I never saw him cry until he lost his home," the woman told the NTU.

Keep It Simple. The tax code's complexity remains the biggest problem faced by taxpayers. "Unfortunately, too little is being done in this area by the Congress or the Treasury Department," the NTU says. "The tax code is so convoluted that no one inside or outside the IRS understands it."

How bad is it? When *Money* magazine gave a recent quiz to professional tax preparers on basic tax questions, all 45 of

and taxpayers still do not receive the service they deserve," David Keating, senior counselor to the National Taxpayers Union, testified before the House Subcommittee on Government Management, Information and Technology.

"It is far too early to conclude whether IRS reform will succeed or fail. If reform is successful, it will take many years before the average taxpayer will notice substantial improvements in the operations of the IRS," Keating said. "The risk of failure is still high due to the tax law's growing complexity, the agency's resistance to change, criticism and independent advocacy for taxpayers, and the possibility that elected officials will pressure the IRS to increase enforcement at the expense of fairness to taxpayers."

Still, Keating gives Rossotti high marks for his work thus far: "We are impressed with much of [his] work and the caliber of several of the people he has hired. We believe he brings the right background and attitude to the job."

More Reform Needed. But many problems remain at the IRS that still need to be fixed, say government audits and outside IRS critics. Among them:

Thousands of taxpayers receive IRS notices saying they owe back taxes they have already paid, and thousands more give up their right to refunds, according to a recent independent audit by the IRS Inspector General. The audit found the core of the problem is that the IRS computer

is not directly hooked up to the agency's 10 service-center computers for timely notices of refunds.

Much of the problem centers on late filers who do not file a subsequent claim for a credit or refund of overpayments within the specified time. The auditors said that hundreds of millions of dollars are forfeited by taxpayers and that the IRS can do more to let taxpayers know they must file for overpayment, which is refunded on a timely basis.

The IRS is overtaking 1.7 million parents as a result of its failure to notify families of their right to a child tax credit. "This may well be a billion-dollar secret that takes money out of the pockets of parents," Keating said.

The IRS Inspector General recommended last year that the IRS' Customer Service branch "should request a computer routine to identify taxpayers who may qualify for the Child Tax Credit but did not claim it on their 1998 income tax return."

IRS notices are routinely sent out to lower-income taxpayers to inform them that they may qualify for the Earned Income Tax Credit. Parents should receive similar notices about their right to a \$500-per-child tax credit, the IRS says.

The IRS needs to provide quick relief to innocent men and women who, through no fault of their own, are hit with huge tax claims, often because their spouses left them with unpaid tax bills. The IRS has halted enforcement

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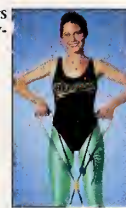


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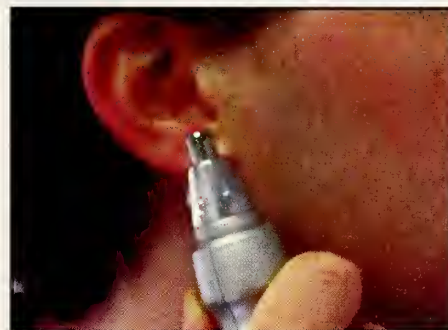
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them produced conflicting answers.

Unfortunately, with each new federal tax bill, even one that cuts taxes, the tax code becomes even more complicated as new credits, exemptions and other intricate provisions are added to the code. These cost people and businesses billions of dollars each year to comply.

Rossotti argues that there are "no quick fixes" and that to fully implement the reforms will take years. At the moment, he is still in the midst of a massive restructuring and retraining effort to change the agency and the way it deals with taxpayers.

Nevertheless, Rossotti has tried to clean up a number of trouble spots, notably the many problems small business owners – who generate \$1 trillion a year in federal tax revenues – struggle with each year when they submit corporate tax returns.

In October, the IRS launched a new program to reach out to its largest taxpayer base by opening a Small Business/Self-Employed division. Staffed with 40,000 workers, and a headquarters based in New Carrollton, Md., near Washington, D.C., it is one of four units the IRS is dividing itself into under its sweeping reorganization plan.

Sorting the Mystery. One of the new division's jobs, headed by Joseph Kehoe, a retired managing partner at the PriceWaterhouseCoopers accounting firm, will be to reach out to small businesses and help them before, during and after tax filings. "Most of the problems dealing with taxes that we see is they simply do not understand," Kehoe said.

At the same time, evidence suggests the new reform law is curbing the IRS' zeal to seize property in tax-delinquent cases. Property seizures for back taxes, for example, have declined by 98 percent. Taking a person's property in a tax case now involves a 54-step gauntlet that IRS agents say is nearly impossible to complete.

The IRS is overtaxing 1.7 million parents as a result of its failure to notify families of their right to a child tax credit.



A study by Syracuse University researchers also showed that the tighter rules governing agents – and tighter IRS budgets under the GOP Congress – also has curbed the agency's excessive zeal for imposing penalties on late-paying or delinquent taxpayers. Fines or attachments of paychecks and bank accounts have dropped by 85 percent since 1991, the study found. Liens declined by 69 percent.

But perhaps the biggest problem with the IRS, which the 1998 reforms did not touch, has to do with the tax rates themselves, which now levy the highest tax burden on Americans since the end of World War II.

President George W. Bush ran on an ambitious \$1.3 trillion across-the-board tax cut agenda to help lower- and middle-income workers as well as stimulate increased investment and savings to boost business expansion, job creation and economic growth.

Among other things, Bush's plan would replace the IRS' five income tax rates with four, including a lower 10-percent marginal tax rate for those at the bottom of the income tax bracket. Bush also would double the \$500 per child family tax credit, virtually eliminate the marriage penalty, abolish the death tax and expand IRA plans.

Boosting the Surplus:

The Congressional Budget Office recently revised its economic growth forecasts for the coming decade, which will boost the budget surplus to an estimated \$4.6 trillion. My own guess is that this revenue estimate, like CBO's previous estimates, will be revised significantly upward once the growth incentives in the Bush tax plan kick in.

A lot is still wrong with the IRS, and further reforms in the way the tax code is administered must be made.

I still believe that a simplified flat tax, along the lines that Steve Forbes outlined in his 2000 presidential campaign, would be the fairest and most sensible reform we could undertake, saving our economy tens of billions of dollars annually in tax preparation, collection and enforcement costs. But that idea is still a long way from being sold to the American people.

Meantime, lowering the tax rates – making them fairer and flatter – is the best tax refund we can give to the American people who have produced the greatest economic expansion in U.S. history. No one deserves it more. □



Donald Lambro is the chief political correspondent for The Washington Times and a nationally syndicated columnist. He is the author of five books, including "Fat City: How Washington Wastes Your Taxes."

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BLUE CAPS BEHIND BARS

Con Thien Post military veterans live rare Legion experience at New York's Arthur Kill Correctional Facility.

By James V. Carroll

Assistant Editor

Photos by Tom Strattman

MEMBERS OF Con Thien Memorial Post 1945, all 48 of them, could be mistaken for any Legionnaire: They attend meetings, conduct Americanism classes and raise money for worthy causes. But the similarities end there. Con Thien Post members are "blue caps" behind bars, members of one of a few prison Posts in the country.

Their daily life is strictly monitored by prison staff. The Legionnaires eat together. They live in dormitories with little privacy, their beds separated only by four-foot-high partitions. The Post executive board meets once weekly and members have access to their Post meeting room the third Wednesday of each month. And they are not permitted to wear their American Legion caps outside the Post meeting room.

Many of the Con Thien Legionnaires are Vietnam War veterans, hence the Post's name memorializing one of the

war's major battles. Others served later. Former Marine Hakim Rashid, 3rd vice commander of the Post, was on guard duty when terrorists bombed the Marine barracks in Lebanon. Wounded in the attack, he was awarded the Purple Heart.

The inmate Legionnaires take pride in their Post activities, but they recognize their incarceration is the price they pay for breaking the law. They are prisoners, to be sure.



Robert Buss takes a break on his bunk in the veterans' dormitory at the prison.



From left, Post Commander Donald Strafford, 2nd Vice Commander Robert Southard, Hugo Santillana and Robert Buss of Con Thien Post 148 stand among chairs in the prison's refurbishing center.

"We're not proud we're incarcerated veterans, but there are many ways we continue to change our lives and continue to serve our communities and country," says Post Commander Donald Strafford. "We are trying to get past the wrong things we've done and once again become good citizens."

Prisoners Awaiting Release. Arthur Kill Correctional Facility on Staten Island, N.Y., is a transitional facility. Most inmates at the medium security prison are awaiting release, serving time for a wide array of crimes. Many are behind bars for crimes related to drug addiction. The average stay for inmates is three to four years.

Despite the obvious limitations of prison life, inmate Legionnaires at Arthur Kill involve themselves in numerous Legion projects throughout the year. These activities impact the lives of hospitalized veterans, families whose children are hospitalized and others in need of a helping hand inside and outside the prison walls, Strafford adds.

"Since our Post was chartered 11 years ago, we've committed ourselves to participate in children and youth activities that serve those who will lead us



"As a way of providing services to veterans at Arthur Kill, we have designed and sponsored numerous self-help groups," Strafford says. "And past Post Commander Robert Buss was instrumental in getting a memorial wall constructed to display the American Flag in front of the veterans' dormitory."

The Con Thien Legionnaires host doughnut and coffee receptions for inmates on selected holidays throughout the year, Strafford says.

Perhaps the most significant contribution made by Legionnaires inside Arthur Kill is their participation in the New York County Arthur Kill Board of Education Chair Refurbishing Project. Legionnaires and other veterans refinish and paint more than 1,000 tables and chairs a year. In the past two years, the project saved New York schools hundreds of thousands of dollars. Prisoners can refurbish a chair or table for \$25 to \$30, a cost that typically runs \$70 to \$110 on the outside. Inmates disassemble chairs and tables. They then sandblast and apply new paint to the metal parts, strip the wood seats, backs and tops, and apply new protective finishes.

Outside Support Essential. Despite positive Post programs, inmate Legionnaires face a number of difficulties inside the walls of Arthur Kill. Money is scarce and the Post must often depend on the assistance of prison administrators and outside Legionnaires.

It's impossible for the Post or its programs to succeed – indeed to exist – without outside support, Strafford says. Fortunately, prison officials embrace the Post. Other Richmond County, N.Y., Legion Posts offer unselfish, invaluable help, too, he says.

Most administrators at Arthur Kill and at the New York State Department of Correctional Services support the program, says Dennis Breslin, superintendent at Arthur Kill, and longtime advocate of the Con Thien Post.

"Studies indicate incarcerated veterans who interact with other veterans are less likely to return to prison than are those veterans who do not," Breslin says. "And veterans who interact also are less likely to return to prison than inmates in the general prison population."

Most veterans at Arthur Kill are housed in a single dormitory and afforded the opportunity to participate in state prison veterans programs or become Legionnaires if eligible. It makes sense to support programs that bring positive results, Breslin says.

"It's normal to expect people to ask why we treat incarcerated veterans differently than we do other inmates," he says. "But the data shows it's beneficial to everyone involved to promote and encourage veteran interaction programs."

Support for the Post has not always been unanimous. One early detractor was Gerald A. Wells, deputy superintendent for security at Arthur Kill. His opposition was not so much philosophical as practical. He has since changed his mind.

"I was opposed to creating a veterans' unit. I felt that getting all these vets together in a prison setting, especially if they were looking to be antisocial, could create a security situation you didn't want," Wells says. "I was pleasantly surprised. It worked. The program has proven itself. It's a benefit to the inmates and to many of the staff."

Local Legion leadership has offered support to inmate Legionnaires since the inception of the prison Post, says Mark Caruselle, executive director of American Legion Staten Island and past New

into the future. We've won numerous citations and awards for our efforts to help children," Strafford says. "We've twice sponsored children in the Special Olympics. We've also been involved in the Buddy Bear Project by donating stuffed bears to give to children who need comfort in hospitals, hospices, schools, day-care centers and Head Start programs. And we collect soda can pull-tabs to help children receive the dialysis they need to live normal lives."

Con Thien Legionnaires also seek donations from area businesses and organizations in order to give toys to children who visit their incarcerated fathers at Arthur Kill during the holiday season, Strafford says. "This past Christmas our Post historian, Denis Tremblay, played Santa Claus. All the children got a toy and a free picture of themselves taken with Santa," Strafford says.

The Post co-sponsors Make A Difference Day, when Legion members seek canned goods contributions from the entire inmate population. The collected food is donated to area battered women's shelters, children's centers and homeless shelters. The Legionnaires also collect canceled stamps for hospitalized veterans. The stamps are assembled into stamp books by veterans as a form of therapy.

The Legionnaires focus, too, on helping themselves and their fellow prisoners.



Robert Buss, Past Commander of the Con Thien Post, left, discusses Legion issues with Past New York 2nd District Commander Victor L. Prevosti of Post 1544.

York Department Vice Commander.

"We feel very comfortable with the veterans at Arthur Kill. We're impressed with them," Caruselle says. "I think the Con Thien Post is a positive thing; it gives the inmates a direction for the future."

Second District Vice Commander Harry S. Krone agrees. "It should be remembered that we are a veterans organization. We are dedicated to helping veterans. And this is a program that fits into that definition," Krone says. "The Legion program at Arthur Kill is not unlike the vocational or educational programs that are here. The Legion Post helps inmates toward the day they go out and try to fit into civilian society again. That's why we're supportive of it."

But mere support is not enough to run a Legion Post – it takes money. The cash needed to continue the programs sponsored by the Con Thien Post comes primarily from fellow inmates at Arthur Kill. Needless to say, the group has precious little disposable income. Con Thien's primary fund-raiser is the sale of doughnuts. The Post purchases them from an outside vendor and resells them to the Arthur Kill inmates for a small profit.

"We earn very little working inside the prison and have to buy soap, toothpaste and other personal items with the money we earn," Buss says. "There's not a lot of extra money left over. When inmates donate money for our activities, they often give up something else they might want or need."

It's difficult, too, for inmates to pay annual American Legion dues.

"When we go to a Legionnaire and tell him it's time for dues, it's often a sacrifice to come up with the money. The average person makes anywhere from 17 cents to 24 cents an hour. Dues are \$17," Buss says. "A porter making 17 cents an hour mopping floors has to work 100 hours to pay Legion dues. It may take three to four months to save the money."

That aside, Hugo Santillana, 1st vice commander of the Con Thien Post, manages to keep Legionnaires on the Post roll and even recruit new members.

"Con Thien Post has the highest membership rating in the county, attaining 104 percent of its goal," Santillana says. "I think we are able to keep Legionnaires and recruit new members because the Post is involved in programs that are meaningful."



Robert Mahoney, left, retired Arthur Kill prison guard and founder of the Post, and Post Commander Donald Stafford meet in Con Thien Post's prison office.

Stafford says he is proud of Santillana's membership efforts and of Post programs such as Narcotics Anonymous 12-Step Recovery, Special Needs (for inmates with learning, psychological and addiction problems), Family Day, Christmas Weekend and, of course, the Post's Americanism program. The commander also is appreciative of help from Richmond County

Legionnaires.

"They are there when Con Thien needs them most. They are our link to the outside, and they also participate in a number of our Post activities," Stafford says. "On Family Day, we awarded group certificates to program graduates. The Richmond County commander attended and assisted. It made the guys feel good to have the County Commander there to award certificates. We could do it, but they would rather see someone from the outside."

But Stafford makes a point that Con Thien Legionnaires are no different than those in other Posts outside prison walls.

"You have to remember this is an American Legion Post. One of our primary goals is to promote Americanism. We push Americanism to people," Stafford says. "We may not be outside, but the members of this Post continue to do positive things inside the fences of Arthur Kill. And we try our best to be good citizens and assist worthy projects outside the prison, too. We believe in The American Legion and what it stands for." □

Article design: Holly K. Soria

Con Thien Post is rare, but not alone

There are approximately 15,000 American Legion Posts in 55 Departments around the world. It's estimated that fewer than half a dozen active Posts are located inside prison facilities.

The precise number isn't easy to determine at the national level because Post charters do not specify that a Post is located at a correctional facility. However, active prison Posts are known to exist in Indiana, Minnesota, Missouri and Colorado, says Billy Johnson, the Legion's national membership director.

Post 130 at the Indiana State Prison in Michigan City has 50 members, says Indiana Department Adjutant K. Michael Ayers. Inmate Legionnaires participate in a number of Legion projects.

Post 900 at Missouri Eastern Correctional Center, Pacific, Mo., also is active, says its Post finance officer, Timothy Lantz. Inmate veterans positively impact the outside community in their capacity as Legionnaires, Lantz says.

Post 1998 at the Prairie Correctional Facility in Appleton, Minn., has been active for four years, says Department Adjutant Lyle Foltz. But the Post is struggling.

"At last count, they had two members at the Post – down from a high of 27 members – but the two Legionnaires are trying to recruit new members. A number of inmate veterans may be eligible to join, so we are optimistic," says Foltz. "We're not going to give up on them."

It's too late for optimism at a prison Post in Tennessee. The charter for Post 103 was cancelled after membership dwindled at one of the state prison facilities in Nashville.

"It simply was a matter of numbers," says Mike Hammer, Tennessee Department Adjutant.

Legionnaires at a Canyon City Correctional Facility in Canyon City, Colo., will soon face a similar fate, says Department Adjutant Charles Smith. A changing political climate in the Colorado correctional system and the fact that only two Legionnaires remain means the demise of the Canyon City prison Post.

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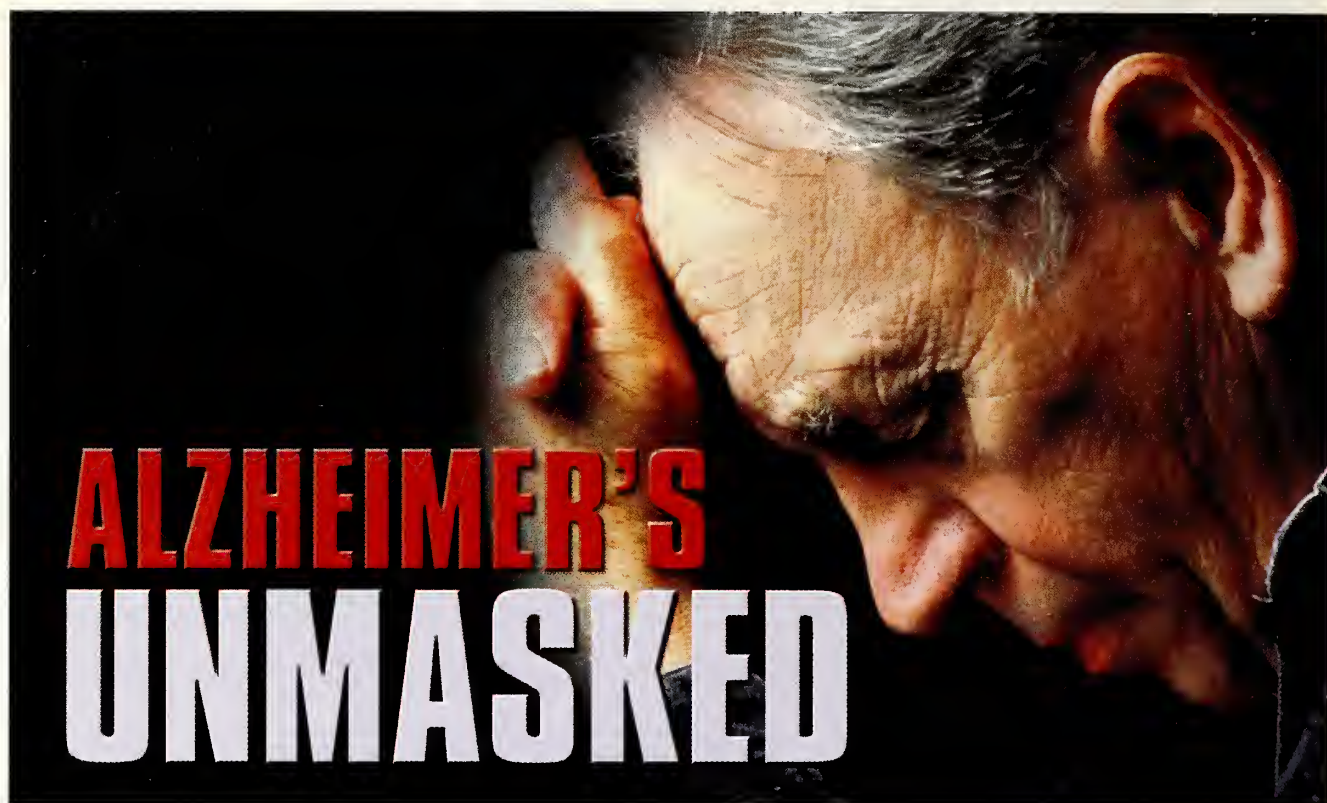
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Science untangles the fibers of this degenerative disease.

By Elissa Kaupisch
Assistant Editor

Bill Warren* first began to notice something was wrong five years ago. He had just passed the age of 50 when he began experiencing problems at work.

"At first, it was little things like misplacing my appointment book," he recalls.

A few months later, he couldn't remember the names of friends and clients he'd known for years.

"There were times I couldn't do the simplest functions, like counting change," he admits. "It was so humiliating. Then one day, I forgot how to get home."

Soon after, Warren was diagnosed with Alzheimer's disease.

"The changes weren't sudden or dramatic. They sneak up on you," Warren says. "As the disease progressed, I had bigger issues to deal with. I was terrified at the thought of losing my mind."

Reactions such as these are typical of people with Alzheimer's disease.

A degenerative disease characterized

* Name changed to protect privacy.

by a gradual loss of memory and other mental functions, Alzheimer's is the most common form of dementia. It afflicts approximately 10 percent of adults over 65 and almost 50 percent of those over 85.

Finding a Cause. No one knows exactly what causes Alzheimer's. However, research indicates that accumulations of the protein beta-amyloid, primarily in the areas of the brain where memory and intellectual function occur, cause a release of poisons that ultimately kill nerve cells. The brain gradually shrinks from the resulting loss of nerve cells. Multiple factors may contribute to the disease: genetic tendencies, environmental influences, nutritional deficiencies and physical trauma.

■ **Genetic tendencies.** Two types of Alzheimer's disease have been identified: sporadic, where no obvious pattern of inheritance exists; and familial, where people in succeeding generations develop the disease. The familial type, referred to as "early onset" Alzheimer's, strikes people in their 40s and 50s.

■ **Environmental influences.** Studies have linked certain toxins to the on-

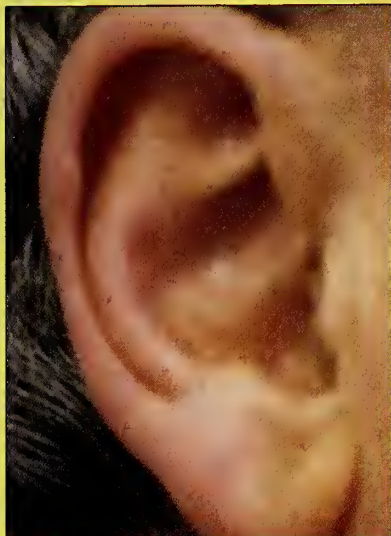
set of Alzheimer's. Because high levels of aluminum and mercury are often found in the brain cells of Alzheimer's victims, these metals may be a causal factor in the disease's development.

According to Dr. James Balch, a urologist and member of the American Medical Association, "Accumulations of up to four times the normal amount of aluminum have been found in the brain cells of people who died of Alzheimer's disease."

People ingest aluminum from a variety of products: aluminum containers and cookware, antacids, antidiarrheal medications, buffered aspirin, deodorants and some feminine hygiene products, food additives and certain anti-dandruff shampoos.

Mercury, a cumulative poison and one of the most toxic metals, is retained in brain cells. Sources of mercury include: fungicides, pesticides, cosmetics, silver-colored dental fillings, fabric softeners, printer and tattoo inks, latex, plastics, polishes, solvents, wood preservatives, some medications and some paints. Mercury is also found in soil, water and food, especially larger-sized fish.

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■ **Nutritional deficiencies.** Reduced levels of certain vitamins and minerals are thought to be linked to the development of Alzheimer's. These include folic acid, vitamin E and magnesium.

■ **Physical trauma.** Head injuries may also be a factor in the development of Alzheimer's. Research indicates that people who suffer head injuries are at twice the risk of developing Alzheimer's; those with severe head injuries face up to four times the risk.

Wide Range of Symptoms. Symptoms vary from depression, fatigue and occasional forgetfulness to disorientation and paranoid behavior. This range of symptoms frequently causes misdiagnosis.

In the disease's early stages, symptoms may be so subtle that even the most perceptive physician fails to notice them. Frequently, a relative, friend or employer is the first to spot warning signs.

The most common symptoms in the early stages of Alzheimer's are short-term memory loss, difficulty performing math calculations, poor judgment and the need to have information repeated numerous times. Many people confuse ordinary forgetfulness with Alzheimer's. But the difference is evident by this example: If you forgot where you left your glasses, it's forgetfulness. If you forgot that you wear glasses, that may be a sign of dementia.

Early on, many people with Alzheimer's try to hide their symptoms to avoid negative reactions. "But with Alzheimer's, there exists a big safety factor," warns Dr. Cynthia Holzer, a researcher and clinician in geriatric medicine at the University of Cincinnati. "Since people with these symptoms are at risk of endangering themselves and others, they need to be identified as early as possible."

In advanced stages of Alzheimer's, there is generalized stiffness of the muscles, with slowness and awkwardness in all movements. In severe cases, victims become completely incapable of caring for themselves. Toward the end, the affected person may have lost all ability to perceive, think, speak or move. Eventually, there may be a complete disintegration of the personality.

Diagnosis and Treatment. Examination by a competent physician is essential. The doctor may conduct a medical history, physical exam and intellectual tests on the patient, while searching for

other underlying diseases or conditions that might be causing mental deterioration. Lab tests and X-rays may be performed.

Although no cure exists, drugs specific to Alzheimer's disease may actually improve memory in some patients. Cholinesterase inhibitors such as Aricept and Exelon, new medications on the market, have been proven to have some positive effects on behavior, cognition and activities of daily living.

According to Dr. Thomas McRae, one of the medical directors of the Alzheimer's Disease Management Team for Pfizer Inc., Alzheimer's medications are sometimes prescribed in combination with other medications and supplements. For example, doctors are commonly prescribing Aricept in combination with Vitamin E.

McRae noted that a study to be completed in late 2001 will likely reveal the effectiveness of combining Aricept with estrogen for women with Alzheimer's.

Another study is combines the use of non-steroidal anti-inflammatories such as Celebrex with cholinesterase inhibitors.

Recent research indicates that a proposed Alzheimer's vaccine may actually work. The vaccine would be used on patients who already have the disease or as a preventative for people at risk of contracting the disease.

Another ongoing study suggests blood pressure medication and cholesterol-lowering drugs, as well as calcium channel blockers, might also prove beneficial in the treatment of Alzheimer's.

An Ounce of Prevention. Research indicates that education and mental exercises help act as a buffer against Alzheimer's disease. So, instead of clicking the TV remote relentlessly, pump some mental neurons. To keep the brain fit, work crossword puzzles, do math problems without a calculator, solve word and memory games and pursue new avenues of learning. An ounce of prevention really is worth a pound of cure. □

Your Health is a column written to provide general information to our readers. It is not intended to be nor is it medical advice. Readers should consult with their personal physicians when they have health problems.

Article design: Holly K. Soria

VA Dementia Care, Research Growing

Due to the increasing number of aging veterans with dementia, U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) funding for research on Alzheimer's disease and other degenerative brain disorders grew to more than \$7.5 million in fiscal 2000, with an additional \$21.7 million added from various federal agencies and private foundations. Recent VA dementia-care projects include:

■ **Advances in Home-Based Primary Care for End-of-Life in Advancing Dementia (AHEAD).** VA Home-Based Primary Care teams help improve home care for veterans with dementia.

■ **Alzheimer's Disease and Managed Care Demonstration Project.** A project called "Chronic Care Networks for Alzheimer's Disease" is co-sponsored by the Alzheimer's Association and the National Chronic Care Consortium. Sites are testing new approaches to serve people with dementia and their families. Clinical tools have been developed to facilitate dementia diagnosis and care management.

■ **Alzheimer's Caregiving Strategies.** This computer program educates and trains the family caregivers of dementia patients. The CD-ROM is available for purchase from HealthCare Interactive Inc. by calling toll-free at (952) 848-0891 or online at www.hcinteractive.com. This interactive program provides basic information on Alzheimer's disease, guidelines for assessing the functional capacity and stage of dementia, and specific strategies for day-to-day dementia care appropriate at each stage.

■ **Dementia Identification and Assessment: Guidelines for Primary Care Practitioners.** This guideline provides an algorithm for the identification and diagnosis of dementia with the role of the primary care practitioner emphasized.

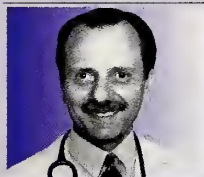
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THE **WAR** FOR RECRUITS

High-school graduates are being denied opportunities, as principals bar military recruiters from campuses.

By Alan W. Dowd

THE REPORTS FROM the front-lines are as ominous as they are numerous: The Air Force is short 1,200 pilots; the Navy is protecting the seas despite 12,000 empty billets; the Army has endured perhaps its worst recruiting stretch in a generation, falling short by 800 soldiers in 1998 and a staggering 6,500 in 1999; and after a decade of cutting and deploying and making do, the military's ranks have shrunk by 700,000.

As America's defenses are suffering from a manpower shortage, the nation's high-school graduates are suffering from a shortage of a different kind—one that's just as critical to America's security and future. Lacking the skills, the confidence, the discipline and the know-how to succeed in the New Economy, many high-school graduates are not prepared for the high-tech world they enter after commencement. It's not difficult to recognize that the military needs them, and they need the military.

This give-and-take relationship is as old as America itself: America's young make a commitment to their country, and their country makes a commitment to them. The bargain has paid great dividends for both sides over the decades. But standing in the way of this critical covenant at this critical moment in history is a most unlikely obstruction—high-school administrators with an agenda.

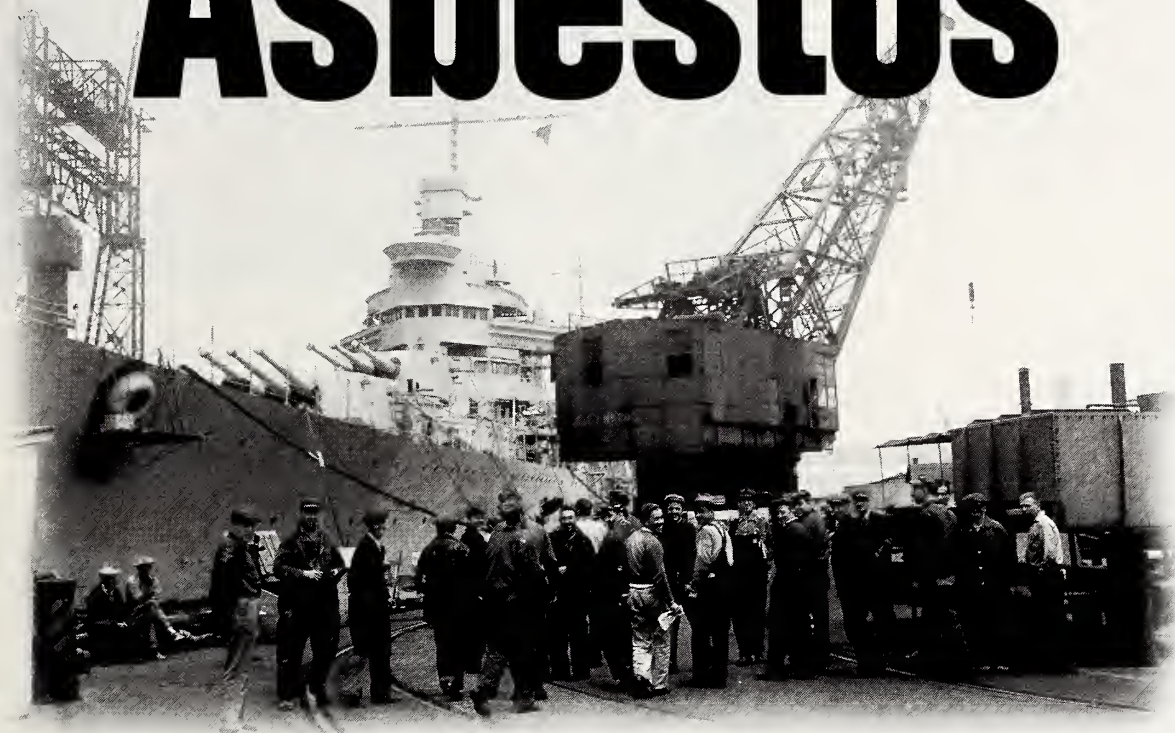
The War at Home. Once confined to college campuses, the practice of denying military recruiters access to students has seeped down to high schools. Individual principals and school corporations alike are shutting their doors to the military. Some are motivated by a kind



Original illustration by James Montgomery Flagg; digital manipulation by Doug Pollack

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of flower-child pacifism; others seek to challenge the Pentagon's policy on homosexuals in the military.

Regardless of their motives, the results are the same: After a nationwide review, the House Armed Services Committee uncovered 19,228 separate instances of military recruiters being denied access at high-school campuses in 1999 alone, the most recent year in which statistics were gathered.

At least 600 schools ban military recruiting of all kinds. Fully one-quarter of America's 21,000 secondary schools place some sort of restriction on recruiting activities. And more than 4,000 refuse to share directory information such as phone numbers and addresses with military recruiters.

If you think this doesn't have an impact on recruiting, think again. According to the House Armed Services Committee, military recruiters widely contend that their inability to gain access to contact information is the "single biggest obstacle to carrying out their recruiting mission."

Because of the anti-military climate on high-school campuses, some recruiters are forced to set up meetings with students through teachers who served in the military. Others are reduced to offering free tutoring just to gain access to students.

It's little wonder Adm. Vern Clark, Chief of Naval Operations, declared during a Senate hearing last fall, "We are at war for people." And the military is losing this home-front war. As a direct consequence, America's military is becoming less able to deter and wage the wars it was made to fight. Indeed, the House Armed Services Committee contends that the practice of denying access to military recruiters is undermining the national defense "by making it more difficult to recruit young Americans in the quantity and of the quality necessary for maintaining the readiness of the armed forces."

Echoing these and other findings, Legion Resolution 114 urges Congress to pass legislation that would "encourage high schools to allow access to military recruiters." The resolution was ratified at the 2000 National Convention in Milwaukee.

Flawed Solutions. The nation's lawmakers are finally taking notice. The fiscal 2000 Defense Authorization Act called on high schools to grant military recruiters "the same access to secondary-school students, and to directory information concerning such students, as is provided generally to post-secondary educational



Master Sgt. James Nickerson, left, and Technical Sgt. Stewart Smith welcome visitors to "The Air Force Experience," a high-tech, interactive road show that showcases career Air Force opportunities. Often barred from high-school campuses, military recruiters are trying new ways to reach young people, such as this effort in Charlotte, N.C., held a week before the Coca Cola 600 NASCAR race.

institutions or to prospective employers."

Although Congress stopped short of imposing any financial penalties for non-compliance, Sen. Tim Hutchinson, R-Ark., led an effort to put teeth into the law. Hutchinson's Military Recruiter Access Enhancement Act sought to deny federal education assistance to high schools that bar military recruiters from campus or refuse to share student-contact information with recruiting officers. Federal laws making the same requirements of colleges are already on the books. (Rep. Joel Hefley, R-Colo., introduced a companion bill in the House.)

"It's extremely important that members of our armed services be allowed to talk to students about a career in the military," said Hutchinson, who chairs the Senate Armed Services Personnel Subcommittee. "An all-volunteer force doesn't just happen. The combined effect of the strongest economy in 40 years and the lowest unemployment rate since the establishment of an all-volunteer armed force makes recruitment especially challenging. We owe it to these recruiters to do all we can to help them succeed in their efforts."

Despite its apparent necessity, Hutchinson's bill wasn't included in the fiscal 2001 Defense Authorization Act. Instead, Congress worked out a compromise aimed at achieving the same objectives without threatening to cut federal dollars. The new law exempts two categories of high schools from federal review: private schools with religious objections to military service and institutions governed by school

boards that have decided by majority vote to deny access to recruiters.

However, this compromise solution lacks any real enforcement mechanism and creates a bureaucratic maze that will confound Pentagon officials and perpetuate the current problems.

Under this measure, when a high school denies access to a recruiter the secretary of defense will dispatch a colonel (or captain, in the case of the Navy) to meet with representatives of the school and encourage them to allow military recruiters on campus. If the school continues to deny access, the secretary of defense will then ask the state's governor for assistance in breaking the impasse. If that doesn't work, the secretary of defense must notify the state's U.S. senators, the congressman who represents the defiant school, the secretary of education and a slew of congressional committees.

From the initial denial of access to the last round of official notifications, this process could last more than a year. And even then, the defiant school could feasibly continue to bar military recruiters from campus without fear of sanction. That doesn't sound like much of a solution.

Statehouse vs. Schoolhouse. However, since this issue cuts across all levels of government — from Capitol Hill to the statehouse to the local school board — some states are trying to solve the problem on their own.

According to Rear Adm. Barbara McGann, chief of the Navy's recruiting

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efforts, 25 state legislatures have pried open their public high schools to military recruiters. Although they are by no means uniform, most of these state measures follow the model set forth by Congress in the fiscal 2000 defense bill, with one significant difference: Whereas the 2000 defense bill "requested" schools open their doors to military recruiters, the states are requiring it.

One of the states just added to that list of 25 is Indiana, which passed its "equal-access" law last year.

In 1999, the state's Commission on Military and Veterans Affairs found that 5 percent of Indiana high schools barred military recruiters from campus and 48 percent refused to share class listings or other contact information. As a result, military recruiters in Indiana were forced to cross-reference information in high-school yearbooks with listings from local phone books.

"I was shocked," says Jim Atterholt, one of the state lawmakers who helped write the Indiana law. "All I could think about was a highly decorated serviceman reduced to hunting for names in the phone book and then making cold calls." From Atterholt's perspective, "This is similar to the way our Vietnam veterans were treated upon returning home. While it's more subtle, it's just as shameful."

Atterholt's measure won bipartisan approval from the state's Republican Senate, Democratic House and Democratic governor.

Even so, fully half the states have yet to hammer out a legislative remedy to this problem. That's why Atterholt believes Hutchinson's bill is necessary. "It's only natural for the federal govern-



Christopher Nelson, a high-school junior in Monroe, La., tries an F/A-18 Super Hornet flight simulator at the school. The Navy uses the fighter simulator as a recruiting tool.

ment to get involved, because its primary role is national defense," he argues.

Pluses and Minuses. Just as Congress and the states are trying to solve the recruiting problem, the services themselves are tackling it from a different angle.

Last year, for example, the Army unveiled an eyebrow-raising program called GED Plus, which promises to sign up an additional 6,000 new troops annually. But it raises eyebrows for all the wrong reasons: None of the program's new enlistees will be high-school graduates.

Under GED Plus, selected recruits earn their General Equivalency Degree at the Army's expense before they begin basic training. The Army believes there are at least 500,000 high-school dropouts who meet the GED Plus standards.

But consider the perverse nature of what the military is being forced to do: Rather than connecting with high-school seniors and juniors while they are in school, the military is ordered to wait in the wings until they drop out. And thousands of high-school students do exactly that every year, sentencing themselves to grim futures. Because their principals have put personal agendas and biases ahead of students' education and development, these young men and women just give up, not realizing that a career in the military could change their lives.

Through luck or desperation, some small percentage of them will be enticed by the GED Plus program. Of course, by that time many of them will literally be out of reach — some because their lives have taken a turn for the better, but many because their lives have taken a turn for the worse. Life isn't easy for high-school dropouts in 21st-century America.

Military service may not be a perfect fit for everybody, but it is for some. And it can be the difference between a life of opportunity and a life of dead ends. As Hutchinson argues, "High schools that deny access to military recruiters prevent students from receiving information about educational and training incentives offered by the armed forces, impairing their career decision-making process."

Even so, with the 107th Congress sharply divided, the prospects of Hutchinson's bill resurfacing anytime soon seem bleak.

Making a Connection. The military spends \$2 billion every year on recruiting and \$268 million on advertising. But as the recruiting woes of the last decade illustrate, it's not glitzy ad campaigns or cash bonuses that awaken the spirit of a would-be recruit. In most cases, young people need to see the uniform, shake the hand and hear the story of someone who has been to Korea or Kuwait or Kosovo defending freedom's frontiers. Nothing can replace that personal connection.

It's obvious that thousands of school administrators are all too willing to prevent the military from making that connection with a new generation of Americans. Nothing short of an ultimatum from state or federal lawmakers will change that. And until that happens, the nation's defenses and high-school graduates will continue to suffer. □



Then-Army Secretary Louis Caldera unveils the College First and GED Plus recruiting initiatives at a press conference Feb. 3, 2000. Joining him is retired Gen. Colin Powell, now serving as secretary of state.



Alan W. Dowd is a freelance writer and a former associate editor of *The American Legion Magazine*.

Article design: Doug Rollison

A Doctor's "Confession" about Diabetes

(SPECIAL) – Here's important news for anyone with diabetes. A remarkable book is now available that reveals medically tested principles that can help normalize blood sugar naturally...and greatly improve the complications associated with diabetes. People report **better vision, more energy, faster healing, regained feeling in their feet**, as well as a reduction of various risk factors associated with other diseases.

It's called the "*Diabetes Improvement Program*" and it was researched, developed and written by a leading nutrition specialist. It shows you exactly how nature can activate your body's built-in healers once you start eating the right combination of foods. It can work for both Type I and Type II diabetes and people report it has helped reduce their insulin resistance. It can give diabetics control of their lives and a feeling of satisfaction that comes from having normal blood sugar profiles.

The results speak for themselves. The "*Diabetes Improvement Program*" is based on research that many doctors may not be aware of yet. It tells you which delicious foods to eat and which to avoid. It also warns

you of the potential danger of certain so-called "diabetes" diets. Diabetics have written letters to the publisher calling this book "very outstanding"... "a tremendous help"...and saying it made "a difference in my life." The "*Diabetes Improvement Program*" is based on documented scientific principles that can help:

- **Eliminate ketones and give you more abundant energy**
- **Make blood sugar levels go from High Risk to Normal**
- **Stimulate scratches and scrapes to heal faster**
- **Improve eyesight**
- **Improve your balance**
- **Help numb feet regain a level of feeling**
- **Reverse neuropathy and resultant heel ulcers**

Improvement may be seen in other areas as well, such as **lower blood pressure, lower cholesterol and reduced triglyceride levels**. There may also be a reduction of other risk factors associated with: **heart attacks, stroke, retinopathy, kidney damage**.

What's more, it may help improve **short term memory** and make you feel **more alert**

and **no longer chronically tired**. Improvements of **double vision** or *diplopia* may also be experienced.

If you or someone you know have diabetes, this could be the most important book you'll ever read. As part of a special introductory offer, right now you can order a special press run of the "*Diabetes Improvement Program*" for only \$12.95 plus \$2.00 shipping. It comes with a 90 day money back guarantee. If you are not 100% satisfied, simply return it for a full refund...no questions asked.

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HAS NAFTA BEEN A SUCCESS?

Rep. Sherrod Brown, D-Ohio



NO The promise of NAFTA was that it would create hundreds of thousands of new jobs for American workers. The reality of NAFTA is that it has been a blueprint for facilitating the movement of U.S. industry to low-wage areas, particularly Mexico. While NAFTA goes to great lengths to protect investors and

property rights, the treaty does not include any enforceable measures to protect workers in the United States or Mexico.

NAFTA has been an abysmal failure. What was a \$1.7 billion U.S. trade surplus with Mexico is now a \$16 billion trade deficit. The trade deficit with Canada, our largest trading partner, has increased to more than \$19 billion. The growing trade imbalance means that more and more Americans are receiving pink slips. Instead of job increases, as promised under NAFTA, we have seen job losses. As of

"Instead of job increases, as promised under NAFTA, we have seen job losses."

September 2000, the Department of Labor had certified more than 507,384 U.S. workers as having lost their jobs due to NAFTA.

Conversely, the enormous amount of wealth created by NAFTA has failed to improve the lives of workers

in Mexico. Although the massive erosion of the manufacturing sector in the United States has created hundreds of thousands of jobs for Mexican workers, the pay is not enough to lift them out of poverty or to ensure their children can attend school or receive adequate health care. In addition, NAFTA does not grant Mexican workers the right to form independent unions to improve their situations.

But NAFTA has reached far beyond the financial issues. NAFTA has become a threat to American consumers with weakened food-safety standards; to the environment with increased pollution at the maquiladora sites on the border; and soon to American motorists with increased truck traffic.

With the passage of NAFTA, Mexican trucks were given permission to deliver goods to any destination in the United States. The U.S. government has tried to delay the foreign truck expansion, citing inadequate safety enforcement programs in border states. According to the Department of Transportation, 44 percent of Mexican trucks fail inspection at the border.

We have fought hard to create policies that make this country safe for our jobs, our environment and our children. NAFTA, and so many other flawed trade agreements, are stripping that safety away.

Rep. Jim Kolbe, R-Ariz.



YES From my district on the Mexico border, I have traveled the world, hunting for losers of the North American Free Trade Agreement. They are an endangered species, if not extinct.

This search has reaffirmed the conviction many of us had in 1993 when we decided to abolish most trade barriers with Mexico and Canada over the next 15 years.

Support for NAFTA has come from across economic, environmental and political spectrums.

Statistical evidence is overwhelming. Two-way trade between the United States and Mexico has risen about 140 percent since 1992. In that time, the United States has gained jobs, not lost them.

Only a handful of jobs in U.S. factories have gone to Mexico or were lost because of NAFTA. The numbers – about 350,000 certified U.S. job losses – are miniscule in a U.S. economy that created 160,000 new jobs a month.

Anecdotal evidence supports the data. In the United States, I see American companies flourishing from sales to, and imports from, Mexico. In Mexico, I see residents using Craftsman tools, driving Fords, riding Huffy bicycles, watching CNN, renting movies at Blockbuster and eating Big Macs.

When I talk to Mexican-American families both in the United States and Mexico, I ask, "Who has lost?" They look at me, puzzled. I now find American businessmen who can pick out Morelia, Michoacan, on a map with the same ease as Topeka, Kan.

Most Mexicans come into and out of the United States legally, but substantial numbers still cross our borders illegally. Critics somehow construe this as a failure of NAFTA. Imagine how it would be if the Mexican economy were weaker rather than brighter because of NAFTA.

A stable, newly prosperous electorate gave opposition leader Vicente Fox the presidency Dec. 1, 2000. It was the cleanest election in Mexican history. In time Mexico might have inched toward credible elections without opening its borders, but I believe history will determine that NAFTA expedited them.

By liberalizing its trade policies before 1993, Mexico opened the gate to NAFTA. We are indebted to our southern neighbor for having brought us back to our free-trade origins.

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Seeking a clean sweep

Known as the FBI agent in the Clinton White House, Gary Aldrich left to write the book "Unlimited Access," which criticized federal security violations. But he said he would eagerly go back to the Justice Department and help Attorney General John Ashcroft clean house.

"I'd have to ask him to fix any speeding tickets I would get driving down there at this moment," he said. "I love the FBI. I spent 26 years there working as an agent. Ninety-nine percent of the people there are good, honest, patriotic citizens. But we have too many spineless bureaucrats" who he said buckled under White House pressure to ignore security procedures.

Russia's loose nukes

Billions of dollars have been spent through the Nunn-Lugar program to reduce the nuclear danger in Russia. Supporters say it has strengthened the security of nuclear materials and deactivated or dismantled thousands of warheads, missiles or launchers. However, some experts have their doubts.

Dr. J. Michael Waller, vice president of the American Foreign Policy Council, said he believes some money has been diverted to Russian chemical, biological and nuclear programs. He noted that several General Accounting Office reports have been critical of the program's administration.

Waller conceded the program has enabled the United States to monitor the situation in Russia. But what has been discovered, he said, is that Russian officials are in complete control of the process. "What they've managed to do," Waller insisted, "is hoodwink us into dismantling their old weapons while they develop new ones to replace them."

Waller, author of the *Insight* magazine article "U.S. Aid is Funding Russian Weapons," has urged the Bush administration to review the program.

Former Sen. Sam Nunn, D-Ga., is now working with Ted Turner on the \$250 million "Nuclear Threat Initiative," a five-year campaign that also will focus mostly on Russia. Nunn and Turner were joined at a Washington news conference by Sen. Richard Lugar, R-Ind.

Despite the perceived success of the federal program named after them,



In December, at Connecticut-based Sikorsky Aircraft, radical activists demanded a halt to production of Black Hawk helicopters for use against drug activities in Colombia.

Radical groups targeting military installations

Military installations and defense contractors are bracing for more attacks from those opposed to national missile defense, increased arms spending and U.S. military involvement abroad. A key target is the U.S. Army Aviation & Missile Command in Huntsville, Ala., where radicals planned the National Space Organizing Conference to protest development of "space weapons."

In November, 1,700 protesters were arrested at Fort Benning, Ga., where they demanded the closing of the U.S. Army's School of the Americas, a training center for Latin American soldiers later renamed the Western Hemisphere Institute for Security Cooperation. Protesters blame the

school for alleged human rights abuses committed by some of the school's former students.

Then, in December, six radical activists were charged with disorderly conduct at Connecticut-based Sikorsky Aircraft, after trying to present the president of the company with a letter demanding a halt to production of Black Hawk helicopters for use against drug activities in Colombia. The company signed two contracts for 30 Black Hawks to be delivered to Colombia by the end of this year.

The Black Hawks, which also have been sold to China, carry up to 11 troops and can be used on virtually any type of combat or support mission.

—C.K.

Nunn and Lugar acknowledged the nuclear problem in Russia is "more dangerous" than ever.

Setting the treaty trap

Congress thinks it has the answer to the emerging International Criminal Court, which could prosecute U.S. troops on bogus charges of "war crimes." The American Service Member's Protection Act would undermine the court by terminating foreign aid or military assistance to any country that becomes a party to the treaty. President Bush may endorse this approach, but the bill has loopholes, reducing its effectiveness.

Exemptions are made for members of NATO and major non-NATO allies, including Australia, Egypt, Israel, Japan, the Republic of Korea and New Zealand.

All but one of the 19 NATO countries have already signed the ICC treaty and eight have ratified it.

Meantime, Sen. Jesse Helms, R-N.C., chairman of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, wants to expand NATO to include the former "captive nations" of Lithuania, Latvia and Estonia. Russia has responded to NATO expansion by storing nuclear weapons in its Baltic enclave of Kaliningrad.

—Cliff Kincaid

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Gulf War pesticide report inconclusive

A study to examine potential long-term health effects of pesticide exposure to Gulf War veterans could neither prove nor rule out any connection between pesticide exposure and chronic health effects.

The Department of Defense commissioned the RAND Corporation to review existing scientific literature on the health effects of pesticides. The research by RAND suggests that pesticides could be among the potential contributing agents to some of the undiagnosed illnesses reported by Gulf War veterans.

While experts continue to study the use and potential long-term health effects of pesticides, DOD investigators found that troops occasionally misused pesticides during the 1991 war.

Surveys indicate that nearly half the troops serving in Southwest Asia reported using DEET insect repellent regularly. Investigators said the most widely misused products were pet and flea collars.

Medicare subvention legislation overdue

Congress must act on Medicare subvention, American Legion Commander Ray Smith testified in Congress earlier this year.

Medicare subvention would allow VA to seek reimbursement from the Health Care Financing Administration (HCFA) for treatment of non-service connected medical conditions for veterans who are Medicare eligible. Congress provides VA with authority to bill private insurance, but Medicare is exempt.

"It is a shame that our older veterans must pay out of pocket for VA care when they should be able to use their Medicare, like every other American," Smith said.

Roosevelt gets Medal of Honor

President Theodore Roosevelt was awarded a posthumous Medal of Honor by President Clinton in January, more than 56 years after Roosevelt's son posthumously received the same decoration.

The elder Roosevelt received his Medal of Honor for his actions during the Spanish-American War at San Juan Hill, Cuba, July 1, 1898, while in command of the 1st U.S. Volunteer Cavalry Regiment, better known as the Rough Riders. Roosevelt is the first president to receive the Medal of Honor.

His son, Theodore Roosevelt Jr., received the Medal of Honor for his actions during World War II at Utah Beach, France, June 6, 1944. The younger Roosevelt was in the first wave at Utah Beach and was the first general officer to land

on a Normandy beach on D-Day.

The Roosevelts are the second father-and-son Medal of Honor recipients.

Arthur MacArthur received his for action at Missionary Ridge, Tenn., during the Civil War. His son, Douglas, received the medal during World War II for his defense of Bataan and Corregidor.



Col. Theodore Roosevelt commanded the Rough Riders in 1898.

VA adds geriatric centers

The growing number of elderly veterans has caused VA to expand its network of geriatric centers with a new one collocated with the Atlanta and Birmingham VA medical centers.

The Geriatric, Research and Clinical Center will join 20 other such facilities across the nation to increase basic knowledge of the aging process and the diseases associated with the aging, VA officials said. Knowledge gained from these centers will be shared with health-care providers to improve quality care to aging veterans, according to VA.

Two prevalent problems – urinary incontinence and mobility – will receive special study at the new center.

Since 1975, geriatric specialty centers have pioneered development of special care units, specialized exercise programs, medication reduction clinics, sexual dysfunction centers and academic nursing home units. The centers also have established spinal chord injury clinics for older veterans, a geriatric preventive health program and adapted work therapy program for veterans with dementia.

The VA currently confronts a demand for geriatric care that the rest of America will face in 15 to 20 years. About 36 percent of the veteran population is 65 years or older compared with 13 percent of the total U.S. population.

Vets favor lump-sum benefits

A survey of nearly 2,500 veterans receiving monthly VA disability compensation showed that 49 percent favored having the choice of one lump-sum payment.

The government pays disability benefits to 2.3 million veterans on a monthly basis. Almost 57 percent of these payments are less than \$200 monthly.

Rep. Bob Stump, R-Ariz., recently elected chairman of the House Armed Services Committee, requested the GAO study in 1999 when he was chairman of the House Veterans' Affairs Committee.

Several independent, bipartisan groups have recommended consideration of the lump-sum options, Stump said. Britain, Canada, Israel and Japan make lump-sum payments to veterans with minor disabilities.

"Given the recommendations for the various commissions, the growing backlog of claims and the fact that about three-quarters of disabilities are 30 percent or less, it made sense to ask veterans themselves if they saw any merit in lump-sum payments," Stump said.

Benefits scams target vets

Schemes to provide veterans up-front money in exchange for their monthly disability or pension checks have raised concern at the Department of Veterans Affairs.

The schemes seem to target the most desperate of our veterans, according to VA officials. Some companies offer veterans as little as 30 cents on the dollar to provide cash today for the monthly check, he said.

Federal law prohibits outright sale of VA benefits, but the companies attempt to avoid the long-standing government prohibition by representing the transactions as loans. Companies persuade veterans to give up their disability or pension checks for a specific period – typically eight years – in exchange for a lump-sum cash payment worth 30 percent to 40 percent during that same period.

For example, a veteran receiving a monthly payment of \$609 would be paid nearly \$60,000 in the course of eight years. The typical up-front cash offer is \$20,000. Some veterans are required to take out a life insurance policy naming the company as beneficiary.

VA conducts veterans survey

A national survey of veterans will continue through August by the Department of Veterans Affairs to help the government plan future programs and veterans services.

"We want to be sure we're meeting the needs of the veterans. This survey helps us to identify those needs and, consequently, deploy our employees and other resources to get the best results for veterans," said VA Secretary Anthony J. Principi.

It's VA's fifth comprehensive survey of a nationwide sample of veterans. Results are expected in 2002. The last survey was 1993, Principi said.

The survey will enable VA to do several things: follow changing trends in veteran population; compare characteristics of veterans who use VA services with those who do not; study VA's role in the delivery of all benefits veterans receive; and update information about veterans to help the department analyze its policies.

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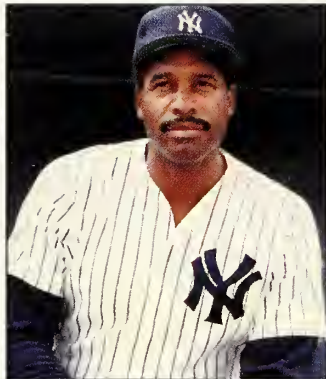
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2001 Hall of Famer inducted

Dave Winfield, a former American Legion Baseball star, was recently inducted into the 2001 National Baseball Hall of Fame.

The 6-foot-6-inch, 220-pound Winfield established himself during his 22-year major-league career as one of the finest all-around athletes to play the game. In his prime with the San Diego Padres and New York Yankees, the right-handed line hitter and solid defensive player earned a reputation as one of the best run producers of his generation.

When Winfield retired with 3,110 hits, 465 home runs and a .283 batting average, he was one of only seven players in baseball history to reach both 3,000 hits and 400 runs. He's among the top 20 all-



In his prime with the San Diego Padres and New York Yankees, the right-handed line hitter and solid outfielder Dave Winfield earned a reputation as one of the best run producers of his generation.

time leaders in hits, RBIs, games, at bats, doubles and total bases. Only four other ballplayers had more hits and

more home runs than Winfield: Hank Aaron, Willie Mays, Eddie Murray and Stan Musial. Winfield also was awarded seven Gold Gloves for field excellence during his career.

In 1968, Winfield was tournament MVP of the Minnesota Legion State Tournament. He played for Attucks-Brooks Post 606 in St. Paul.

The National Baseball Hall of Fame and Museum, which opened its doors in 1939, is the definitive repository of the game's treasures

and is a symbol of the most profound honor bestowed on an athlete. The Hall of Fame is in Cooperstown, N.Y.

Legion Post working with Green Berets

Oak Grove, Ky., Post 233, is working together with the Green Berets stationed at Fort Campbell to increase membership while providing a service to deceased veterans.

Post 233 allows members of the U.S. Army Green Berets of the 5th Special Forces Group (Airborne) to use the Post's ceremonial M-1 rifles during funeral details and formal ceremonies.

In return, Special Forces members actively recruit members of the unit for American Legion membership and provide maintenance for the weapons.

Since working together, Post 233's rifles have been used in many of the unit's details. As a result the Post has received several new members.

Legion leaders brainstorm to reach young vets

The American Legion's National Membership & Post Activities Com-

mittee met Jan. 13-14 at National Headquarters in Indianapolis to dis-

cuss ways to reverse a recent membership slide.

The committee unveiled a new multimedia marketing campaign targeting ages 18 to 35 and recommended the 2002 membership goal be set at more than 2.77 million. The figure matches the 2001 goal but asks each Post to add one new member beyond that.

National Commander Ray Smith told the committee via a videotaped message that the key to bolstering rosters is "having fun."

Innovations like American Legion Soccer, child-care services at Posts and the Reconnect Program were discussed during the weekend as positive steps to spark interest among younger veterans. The committee also studied ways to improve member retention, such as personalized renewal notices and membership coordination with the Auxiliary.

Potential for membership growth is tremendous.



M&PA Committee Chairman Dan Dellinger discusses membership strategies during the committee's two-day planning session at National Headquarters.

Legion supports service academy hopefuls

Nearly 50 of Indiana's top high-school students were interviewed in Indianapolis Dec. 16 at The American Legion National Headquarters by U.S. Sen. Evan Bayh's staff in the hopes of being awarded one of his military academy nominations.

Young men and women desiring an academy appointment must be physi-

cally fit, academically gifted and highly motivated. Leadership skills and a strong desire to serve their country are imperative.

Competition was tough. For many,

it was their second or third time through the process – all by other senators or U.S. representatives. Many said attending a military academy is their lifelong dream.



U.S. Air Force Academy hopeful Donald W. Daily, left, interviews for a nomination from Sen. Evan Bayh, D-Ind., with Annette Henderson and Wayne Vance at The American Legion National Headquarters in Indianapolis.

Legion Series tickets on sale

Yakima, Wash., will be the site of the 2001 American Legion World Series scheduled for Aug. 24-28. From approximately 5,000 local teams across the United States, eight regional champions will converge at Parker Field on the campus of Yakima Valley Community College to compete for the national championship.



The World Series consists of nine sessions totaling 15 games. Tickets may be purchased by calling (800) 258-5878 or (509) 457-1670, by writing to 2001 American Legion World Series, P.O. Box 398, Yakima, WA 98907, or online at www.alws2001.org. The Web site provides lodging, travel and ticket information.

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Wellsville Post 702 members turned a building next to its old home into this brand-new facility.

Post's new facility leads to membership surge

Morrison Hayes Post 702, Wellsville, N.Y., has experienced a membership boom since renovating a dilapidated building into a new \$400,000 facility.

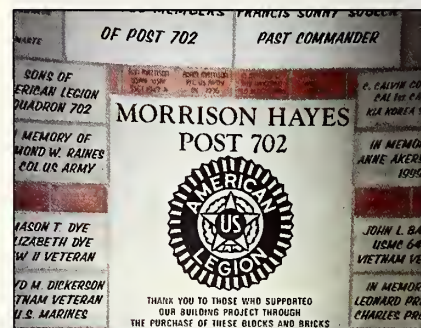
Post Commander John Baldwin said he feels the Post stuck its neck out by building the new facility, but the renovation has really paid off. "Membership has gone crazy," he said.

The Post boasts approximately 500 Legionnaires, as well as 173 Auxiliary members. Baldwin says Post 702's SAL membership is the biggest in Allegany County.

The three-story building has every-

thing a Legion Post could need: a large banquet room seating more than 200, state-of-the-art kitchen, a billiards room, two bars, and plenty of meeting rooms and office space. Most of the actual construction was contracted out, but Post members did their part getting ready for construction.

A good portion of the costs of the facility was defrayed by donations made to the Post's memorial wall. Post and community members purchased bricks in memory of loved ones to be used for building walls within the Post. The memorial bricks honor veterans as far back as World War I.



Post 702 Legionnaires partially funded the construction of their new facility by selling bricks for two memorial walls. The response to the walls was so great that a third wall will be built in April.

Community, Legionnaires revive dying Avon Post

As part of a class project, students attending the 1999 American Legion National College lent a hand to revive a vanishing Legion Post in Avon, Ind. But it was the combined efforts of Legionnaires, veterans and the community at large that successfully pulled Post 145 from the brink of extinction.

Post Commander Fred Hunt said the effort to reinvigorate the vanishing Post began with a Legion membership of three, a Sons of the American Legion membership of zero and absent a Legion Auxiliary. In a mere 14 months, the Post grew to 53 Legion members and 12 SAL members. Twenty women have petitioned the Post to charter a Legion Auxiliary.

Membership had dwindled since its

charter year in 1985; the Post was inactive and was about to lose its charter. Last-minute intercession by Billy Johnson, national director of membership and a Legion College facilitator, and Paul Allen, national finance director, saved the Post's charter.

Johnson, Allen, Legion College students and other Legion officials met with local government leaders, community residents and veterans to familiarize them with the Legion and its youth programs and to explain the benefits of having an



Legionnaires meet amidst the clutter of construction materials at their work-in-progress Post in Avon. Harlan Bakeries donated the meeting room to the resurgent Post.

active Post in the community. Following the meeting, Legion College students undertook a short recruiting drive to sign up new Legion members.

Smith to Army: Respect black beret tradition

According to National Commander Ray Smith, the U.S. Army's recent decision to issue black berets to all soldiers will be detrimental to the morale, prestige and honor of all Rangers – past, present and future.

Smith has received input from the veterans' community, and the overwhelming response to the Army's proposal reinforced his own gut reaction, he said.

The black beret traditionally worn by Rangers, like the green beret of Special Forces, must be earned by successfully meeting the highest standards.

"The American Legion stands for a strong national defense; the welfare,

well-being and morale of the troops is a part of that," Smith said. "The Army cannot support morale by undermining cherished traditions, and that is why the Rangers must exclusively wear

their historic – and hard-earned – black beret. If the generals want to blanket the entire force with a beret, then let the Rangers – and the Rangers alone – wear the black beret. They earned it."

Keystone Legion receives honor

The Department of Pennsylvania is receiving national recognition, including a recent "Point of Light Award," for a 14-year-old program that provides transitional housing for homeless veterans.

Pennsylvania American Legion Housing for Homeless Inc. has grown from one four-unit building in 1988 to seven facilities around the state. The program's performance can be measured by an 85-percent success rate in helping clients find jobs and become productive members of society.

Up to 20 people – men, women and children referred by the Department of Veterans Affairs – are housed each night in the facilities. They stay anywhere from one to 18 months, fit into neighborhoods and pay rent. Legion volunteers manage the properties, including repair and maintenance.

Legionnaire Kenneth Dahner, treasurer for the program since its inception, said rent, donations and fund-raisers had made the program strong enough to have acquired additional properties through the 1990s, broadening its range beyond the Pittsburgh area where it began.

According to national estimates, veterans represent about 25 percent of America's homeless population.

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Legion celebrates Children & Youth Month

April is The American Legion's Children & Youth Month. The theme "Children – Our Most Precious Natural Resource" is underscored by the Legion's partnership with Children's Miracle Network, a nonprofit organization raising funds and awareness for children's hospitals and increasing the quality of life for young people.



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Two of CMN's affiliated hospitals were established through direct Legion involvement. The All Children's Hospital in Florida was founded in 1927 as a Post project. The American Legion Hospital in Jennings, La., dedicated in 1960, is owned and operated by James O. Hall Post 19.

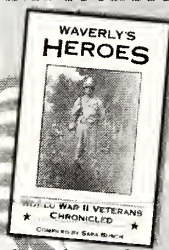
On June 9, Legion members nationwide can participate in the "Miracle Miles for Kids" Walkathon, a joint effort between the Legion and Children's Miracle Network to raise funds for local children's hospitals.

"We marched a million miles for freedom, now let's walk a few miracle miles for children," said Elmer Fuhrhop, chairman of the National Commission on Children & Youth.


The Legion Family also may help the cause by selling paper Miracle Balloons to be signed and displayed in Posts and Units, county or health fairs, and at other community events. Posts also may host other CMN fund-raisers, including Bingo Bucks for Kids, Miracle Meals and Cookouts, sports tournaments, and Fourth of July festivals and picnics, which are described in a special Legion guidebook.

To assist Posts in their fund-raising efforts, planning guides complete with registration forms and time lines are available by contacting the Americanism and Children & Youth Division at (317) 630-1202.

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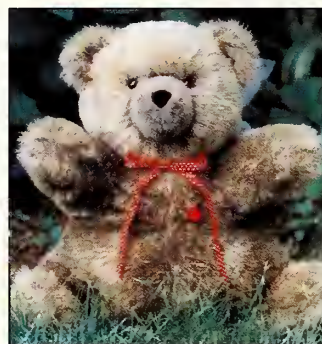
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Legion helps children in crisis

For more than six years, Spinoza's "buddy bear project" has delighted more than 21,000 children in crisis. According to Glenn Wymore, one of Spinoza's child-sponsor coordinators, "The American Legion family is Spinoza's top-sponsoring organization and is responsible for nearly half of these cuddly bear gifts."

Spinoza teddy bears were created in Minneapolis, Minn., in 1984 by a communications specialist and a special education teacher. The comforting creatures are designed as effective resource tools, each concealing a cassette recorder that plays audiotapes with inspirational messages of hope, confidence and self-esteem. The tapes are available in English or Spanish and are used in elementary schools, Head Start, special-education classrooms, hospitals and social services.

Children receiving Spinoza bears are afflicted with maladies such as cancer, ge-



Recorded messages inside Spinoza bears comfort children suffering from various infirmities. The American Legion and its affiliates are one of Spinoza's top-sponsoring organizations.

netic disorders, asthma, severe retardation or handicaps, or have suffered abuse and neglect by loved ones. Although many children have been sponsored, more than 5,200 remain on waiting lists.

Spinoza's Achievers Program offers the opportunity for Posts, Districts and Departments to partner with community facilities distributing the bears. In addition, three types of puppets are available for

fund raising, gifts or for distribution by community organizations. Five dollars from every puppet purchase goes toward sponsoring a child who has been listed as priority or has been on the waiting list the longest.

For more information about Spinoza sponsorships, write to The Spinoza Company, 1876 Minnehaha Ave. West, St. Paul, MN 55104-1029, call (800) 282-2327 or visit online at www.spinozabear.com.

HOW TO USE NATIONAL REUNION REGISTRY*

The **National Reunion Registry** handles all reunion information services for *The American Legion Magazine*. **NRR**, a division of Military Information Enterprises, Inc., is a private organization that provides information about reunions, helps veterans locate old buddies and offers other special benefits to veterans and their families.

NRR maintains contact information on thousands of reunions and provides this information free of charge to veterans.

There are several ways to register reunions or check reunion listings with the National Reunion Registry. Please contact the organization directly by writing to **NRR/Reunions, PO Box 17118, Spartanburg, SC 29301**, by faxing (864) 595-0813 or via e-mail at information@militaryUSA.com. Due to the large number of reunions, NRR cannot accept phone requests for reunion information.

To register a reunion, you should include the complete name of the organization and branch of service with your request. The request

should also include the reunion dates and city, along with a contact name and telephone number. Please also include a size estimate of the group.

Using the Internet is the quickest, most accurate way to access the reunion registry. You may check to see if your buddies are planning a reunion by visiting NRR's Web site at www.MilitaryUSA.com. To promote the best accuracy and fastest process when listing your reunion, complete the Reunion Registration Form available on the Web site.

LOCATING A BUDDY

MilitaryUSA.com offers many services for veterans, including tips and techniques for locating current or former military members. *How To Locate Anyone Who Is or Has Been in the Military: Armed Forces Locator Guide* is a practical guide to help people locate service members. The publication can be purchased by contacting MIE Publishing, P.O. Box 17118, Spartanburg, SC 29301 or by faxing (864) 595-0813.

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Pilot Class 43K, Houston, April, Hal Jacobs, (619) 485-5041, jakes43k@aol.com; **819th Redhorse '66**, '67, Las Vegas, 4/1-4, Mark Guidry, (520) 685-3364, katmar@tabletoptelephone.com; **7th Bomb Wing B-36**, Ft. Worth, TX, 4/19-22, Richard George, (817) 292-4932, b36assn7bw@aol.com; **Pilot Class 43D**, Charleston, SC, 4/25-28, Frank Dutko, (850) 932-3467, dutko43d@hotmail.com; **41st Ftr Sqdn**, San Francisco, 4/29-5/2, Frank Fariello, (650) 327-7587, fralouis@attglobal.net

102nd AC&W Sqdn, Myrtle Beach, SC, 4/29-5/3, Henry Connors, (401) 437-1482, handconnors@juno.com; **22nd Military Airlift Sqdn**, Wright-Patterson AFB, OH, 5/1-3, Glen Sharp, (937) 323-6304; **Flight Checkers**, Oklahoma City, 5/4-6, Scott Hines, (405) 954-7775, scott.hines@faa.gov; **874th AC&W Sqdn**, Las Vegas, 5/11-13, Bruce Shymanski, (303) 663-8620, bshymanski@earthlink.net; **Det 0900 Lahr**, Myrtle Beach, SC, 5/13-17, George Johnson, (910) 455-3450, johngeo4@coastalnet.com; **6th Bomb Grp**, St. Louis, 5/17-20, Ray Defilippo, (636) 343-8555, rdefilippo@aol.com

35th Mnt Supply Grp, New Orleans, 5/18-21, Claude Clawson, (614) 577-0094, cclawson@webtv.net; **59th Med Grp**, Burtonwood AFB, Branson, MO, 5/20-23, Gerald Westfall, (660) 295-4534, gwestfall@hotmail.com; **Society of Retired AF Nurses**, Orlando, FL, 5/22-27, Patricia Brennan, (850) 897-1163, jpbren@aol.com; **330th, 331st FIS**, Tucson, AZ, 5/23-27, Burnell Hostetter, (717) 898-7132, burnell@lancnews.info.net; **3rd Motor Trans Sqdn**, Battle Creek, MI, 5/24-26, Gordon Stine, (616) 965-8988, ahenry@ourtownuse.net; **42nd Bomb Grp**, Montgomery, AL, 5/24-27, Frank Saler, (903) 868-1256, michar331@yahoo.com; **114th Avn Co**, Columbia, MO, 5/29, Jim Gosnell, (305) 292-5681, jgosn10293@aol.com

ARMY

31st Inf Div, 200th Inf Rgt, Co D, Gattinburg, TN, April, Gale Ruth, (419) 562-5387, chughes@backroads.net; **Army Air Traffic Controllers**, Biloxi, MS, 4/6-8, David Sherrow, (719) 596-8386, dasherripi@worldnet.att.net; **1st Div, 92nd Arty, B Btry**, Austin, TX, 4/13-15, Newell Binion, (512) 581-7690; **24th Cbt Map Sqdn**, Pigeon Forge, TN, 4/22-25, Les Bryan, (254) 876-2070; **1st Cav Div, 5th Rgt, 2nd Bn**, Co C, St. Louis, 4/27-29, James Machin, (312) 397-9907, burgertogo@aol.com; **25th, 4th Machine Recon Unit**, Virginia Beach, VA, 4/29-5/2, Russell Ommen, (815) 933-1045, rustyommen@juno.com; **76th Eng Const Bn**, Kissimmee, FL, 5/3-5, Eugene Collins, (859) 623-5084, ejucoll@aol.com; **772nd MP Bn**

Korea, Valley Forge, PA, 5/3-6, Bill McDonald, (708) 422-3892, billmac32@gateway.net; **7th Inf Rgt**, St. Louis, 5/3-6, Curley Faulk, (318) 824-7560; **OCS Alumni**, Columbus, GA, 5/3-6, George McCoy, (770) 973-3170, colgmccoy@mindspring.com; **86th Chem Mortar Bn**, San Antonio, 5/6-9, George Murray, (256) 820-4415; **97th Signal Bn**, Reno, NV, 5/6-11, Reunion Planner, (757) 464-0513, dave97th@aol.com; **61st Field Arty Bn, 1st Cav Div**, Deadwood, SD, 5/8-10, Frank Mowery, (307) 235-8679, fncmowery@aol.com

172nd Eng Cbt Bn, Pigeon Forge, TN, 5/8-11, Joseph Layne, (410) 561-5258, jlayne@qis.net; **Sugamo Prison Assn**, Frankenmuth, MI, 5/9-11, V. Czaja, (409) 291-0934, sugamo@geocities.com; **WAC Raychem**, WAC Det 8117 Okinawa, Ft. Lee, VA, 5/9-12, Barbara Becker, (734) 453-5109, wackywac54@aol.com; **Women's Museum Reunion**, Ft. Lee, VA, 5/9-12, Reunion Planner, (205) 820-3218, usawomen@hiwaay.net

5th Cav Assn, Pigeon Forge, TN, 5/14-20, Freddie Owens, (865) 539-0584, meac1@aol.com; **5th Rgt Cbt Team Assn**, San Antonio, 5/15-19, Dick Lewis, (888) 221-8418, fifrc@excite.com; **Army Security Agency Alpiners**, Washington, 5/17-20, Ralph Thadeus, (314) 367-9577, alpiners@primary.net; **82nd Cbt Eng**, Lake George, NY, 5/17-20, Bill Preston, (518) 695-6078, azpeg1@aol.com; **53rd Inf Rgt**, N. Platte, NE, 5/21-26, Robert Spence, (650) 697-4825, rhspence@flash.net; **94th Inf Div Assn**, Boston, 5/24-26, Harry Helms Jr, (610) 363-7826, harryhelmsjr@aol.com; **102nd ASA Det**, Baltimore, 5/24-28, David Peper, (410) 557-7550, dpeper@mdo.net

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Anyone who served with the 66th Medium Tank Bn at Illeshien, Germany, or the 35th Armor at Bamberg, Germany, between January 1962 and March 1964, contact Jeffery Sweet, P.O. Box 757, Vails Gate, N.Y. 12585 or James W. Robblee, 5773 Olde Wadsworth Blvd., 8A, Arvada, CO 80002 or call (303) 421-2308.

Anyone who served with the 59th Coast Arty Band, contact Lloyd Griffiths, 9811 Rio Vista Drive, Sacramento, CA 95837 or call (916) 929-3232.

Anyone who served on the USS John P. Gray during WWII, contact Amy Looney, P.O. Box 368, 1350 King College Road, Bristol, TN 37620, call (423) 652-4877 or e-mail aplooney@king.edu.

Anyone who served with the 16th Inf Rgt during any wars, including the Cold War, contact Charlie Silk, 8 Old Mill Pond Road, Selbyville, DE 19975 or call (302) 436-9409.

Anyone who served with HQ or Co A, B, C or D, 67th AAA Gun Bn Btry, during WWII, contact Howard E. Wolf, 610 W. River Blvd., Newton Falls, Ohio 44444 or call (330) 872-1467.

Anyone who served with Bulk Fuel 1390 and 1391 MOS or Marine Corps Plt 222 in 1957, contact Marvin Peck, 11025 Lincoln Way West, Ft. Loudon, PA 17224, call (717) 369-4698 or e-mail willsurlf@enter.net.

Anyone who served with the Navy MOKO Expedition to Siberia to establish Fleet Weather Central Khabarovsk between August 1945 and January 1946, contact Hatten S. Yoder Jr. at (202) 478-8966, (301) 365-8758 or e-mail yoder@gl.ciw.edu.

Any Marines who went through boot camp in Plt 212 at Parris Island, S.C., Recruit Depot between July and August 1953 and served in MARS-27, 2nd MAW at Cherry Point Marine Corps Air Station, N.C., from 1954 to June 1956, contact Thomas R. Atkinson Sr., R.R. 5, Box 858, Honesdale, PA 18431.

Anyone who served with Army 441st Counter-Intelligence Corps Det on Saipan during WWII, contact Jerome P. Steigmann, 15422 N. Second Way, Phoenix, AZ 85022, call (602) 993-1824 or e-mail mas15422@aol.com.

Anyone who served with the 512th Sig Co during WWII, contact Maj. Mike Shillinger, Executive Officer, 112th Sig Bn, Ft. Bragg, NC 28310 or call (910) 432-5506.

Anyone who served with Co I, 26th Rgt, 3rd Bn, 1st Inf Div in Europe during WWII, contact Donald Eldridge at 179 School St., Berwick, ME 03901, call (207) 698-4473 or e-mail eldridge@nh.ultranet.com.

Anyone who served on the Army Transport Yard Oiler Y-53 between May 1945 and December 1945 or the Fleet Tug LT-528 between January 1946 and November 1946, contact Robert Collingwood, 7203 N. Crestline St., Spokane, WA 99217 or call (509) 467-2457.

Anyone who graduated with USAF Pilot Training Class 1955-B, contact Dick Nemeth, 3527 Goodview Court, Fairfax, VA 22031, call (703) 280-5075 or e-mail d.hnemeth@att.net, or Dale Peckman, 1970 Thomas Drive, McKeesport, PA 15131, call (412) 751-7102 or e-mail pherkybird@aol.com.

Anyone who served aboard the USS Inflict between 1960 and 1963, contact Norm Azevedo by calling (209) 724-9601 or e-mail oldnaler@cs.com.

Anyone who served with Co C, 35th Eng Bn, 7th Army at Kitzingen, Germany, between 1954 and 1955, contact William E. Crowley, P.O. Box 114, Mansfield, IL 61854 or call (217) 489-9234.

Anyone who served with the Army Eng Avn Firefighting Plt during WWII, contact James G. Davis at 5 Iliwai Loop, Kihei, HI 96753, call (808) 875-8126 or e-mail r11@maui.net.

Anyone who served with the 94th Inf, 365th Rgt during WWII, contact Eugene Breech, 121 Riverhill, Bloomsburg, PA 17815 or call (570) 784-4952.

Anyone who served with Unit G of VC-11 AEW air group detachment aboard the USS Bon Homme Richard in Task Force 77 between May 1951 and December 1951, contact Leonard Suligowski, 218A N. Henry St., Brooklyn, NY 11222, call (718) 383-0594 or e-mail len218a@mindspring.com.

Anyone who trained with Co A, 3rd Bn, 2nd Basic Cbt Tng Bde, Ft. Leonard Wood, Mo., between March and June 1971, contact Mike Hodo, 602 Vine St., Doniphan, MO 63935 or e-mail hodson@iwon.com.

TAPS

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J. Dale Madsen, Dept. of Utah. Nat'l Americanism Cncl. Vice Chmn. 1972-1975; Nat'l Americanism Cmsn. Memb. 1983-1984 and 1985-1990; Nat'l Legis. Cncl. Memb. 1977-1982 and 1987-1990; Nat'l Legis. Cncl. Vice Chmn. 1983-1990; Dept. Cmdr. 1975-1976; and various Department positions.

E. Lawson Schwoppe, Dept. of Wyoming. Nat'l Distinguished Guests Cmte. Memb. 1953-1954 and 1958-1959; Nat'l M&PA Cmte. Memb. 1957-1958 and 1977-1978; Nat'l Contests Supervisory Cmte. Memb. 1967-1986; Nat'l Legis. Cncl. Memb. 1983-1990; Nat'l Legis. Cncl. Vice Chmn. 1991-1994; Alt. Nat'l Exec. Cmte. Memb. 1986-1989; Nat'l Exec. Cmte. Memb. 1989-1992; Nat'l Cmsn. on Children & Youth Liaison Cmte. 1989-1992; Nat'l Sec. Cncl. Vice Chmn. 1996-1997; Dept. Cmdr. 1978-1979; and various Department positions.

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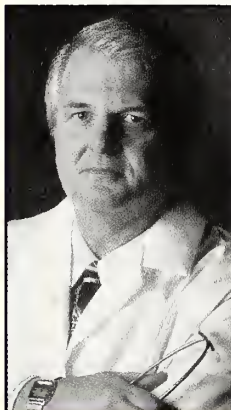


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– Submitted by Alexander J. Bonnett, Euclid, Ohio

Missed the Boat

Someday my ship is going to come in. But with my luck, I'll probably be at the airport when it does.

– Submitted by Frank Wisniewski, Oak Lawn, Ill.

Truth in Advertising?

Newspaper ad: "For sale by owner: 60-volume encyclopedia set. In excellent condition. \$1,500 or best offer. No longer needed. Just got married last week. Wife knows everything."

– Submitted by Charles W. Boyles, Ellenton, Fla.

Cats in the Cradle

There's nothing new about assisted living. My cats have been enjoying it for years.

– Submitted by Suzy Woodruff, Millington, Tenn.

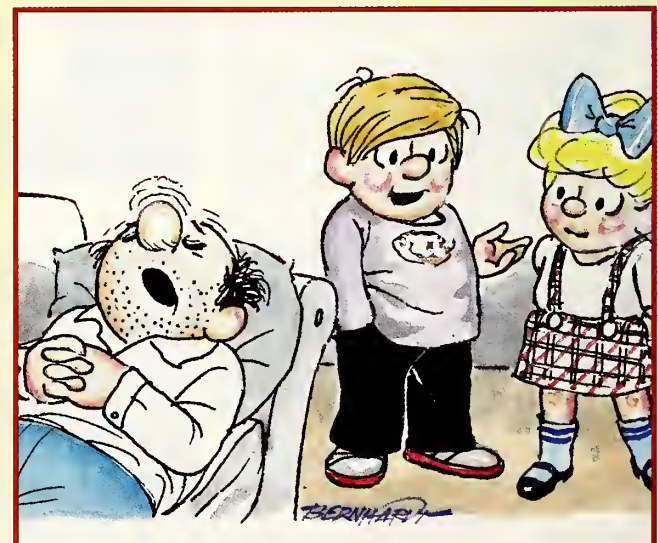
Who's the Boss?

If God is your co-pilot, swap seats.

– Submitted by Gordon W. Cheney Sr., Diamond, Ill.



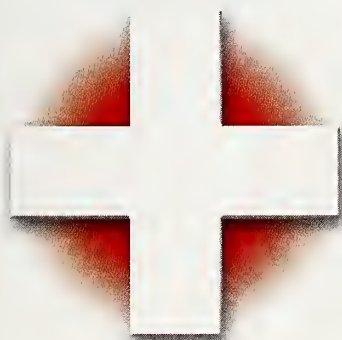
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